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SELECTIONS FROM RUSKIN

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SELECTIONS FROM RUSKIN

(ON READING AND OTHER SUBJECTS)

By EDWIN GINN

With Notes and a Sketch of Ruskin's Life

By D. H. M.



BOSTON
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PREFATORY NOTE.



THIS volume contains Ruskin's four lectures on Books and Reading, War, and Work, selected from "Sesame and Lilies," and the "Crown of Wild Olive," and slightly abridged for school use.

Such notes have been added as seemed necessary for the complete understanding of the text.

JOHN RUSKIN.

JOHN RUSKIN, "the greatest living master of English prose," was born nearly seventy years ago (1819), in a dreary London street not far from the British Museum. He was an only and a lonely child, having no other prospect during his early years "than that of the brick walls over the way," and such amusements as he could find for himself in counting the bricks in those walls, watching the filling of the water-cart at the hydrant, and the like. With such slender resources the boy unconsciously began that method of self-instruction which was ultimately to make him one of the leading minds and educators of the age.

Of his parents he says: "My father began business as a wine-merchant, with no capital, and a considerable amount of debts bequeathed him by my grandfather. He accepted the bequest, and paid them all before he began to lay by anything for himself, for which his best friends called him a fool, and I, without expressing any opinion as to his wisdom, which I knew in such matters to be at least equal to mine, have written on the granite slab over his grave that he was 'an entirely honest merchant.'"¹

¹ These and the following quoted passages are taken chiefly from Ruskin's "Præterita," a series of autobiographic sketches now in course of publication, and from his "Fors Clavigera."

Ruskin's mother had made up her mind to "devote him to God," or, in other words, to educate him for the ministry, and to that end her discipline was somewhat strict ; but, as he says, "entirely right, for a child of my temperament." He was early taught the inestimable lesson of taking care of himself and of not being troublesome ; "and," as he says, "being always summarily whipped if I cried, did not do as I was bid, or tumbled on the stairs, I soon attained serene and secure methods of life and motion."

With a view to the lad's future eminence as a clergyman, he was taken regularly to church, where he tells us, "I found the bottom of the pew so extremely dull a place to keep quiet in (my best story-books being also taken away from me in the morning), that the horror of Sunday used even to cast its prescient gloom as far back in the week as Friday ; and all the glory of Monday, with church seven days removed again, was no equivalent for it."

In the course of a few years the dismal house in town was given up, and a cheerful one with a garden taken on Herne Hill, just outside the city's roar and smoke. "The differences of primal importance," says Ruskin, "which I observed between the nature of this garden, and that of Eden, as I had imagined it, were, that, in this one, *all* the fruit was forbidden ; and there were no companionable beasts ; in other respects, the little domain answered every purpose of Paradise to me ; and the climate, in that cycle of our years, allowed me to pass most of my life in it. My mother never gave me more to learn than she knew I could easily get learnt, if I set myself honestly to work, by twelve o'clock. She never allowed anything to disturb me when my task was set ; if it was not said rightly by twelve o'clock, I was kept in till I knew it, and in general, even when Latin

grammar came to supplement the Psalms, I was my own master for at least an hour before half-past one dinner, and for the rest of the afternoon."

Ruskin's father always returned punctually from his business at half-past four and spent the evening reading aloud, the boy sitting in a little recess like an "idol in a niche," and listening if he chose. Speaking of these readings, he says, "The series of the Waverley novels, then drawing towards its close, was still the chief source of delight in all households caring for literature; and I can no more recollect the time when I did not know them than when I did not know the Bible." Later, "I heard all the Shakespeare comedies and historical plays again and again . . . and all Don Quixote." "Such being the salutary pleasures of Herne Hill, I have next with deeper gratitude to chronicle what I owed to my mother for the resolutely consistent lessons which so exercised me in the Scripture as to make every word of them familiar to my ear in habitual music, — yet in that familiarity revered, as transcending all thought, and ordaining all conduct."

"This she effected, not by her own sayings or personal authority, but simply by compelling me to read the book through for myself. As soon as I was able to read with fluency, she began a course of Bible work with me, which never ceased till I went to Oxford. She read alternate verses with me, watching, at first, every intonation of my voice, and correcting the false ones, till she made me understand the verse, if within my reach, rightly and energetically. It might be beyond me altogether; that she did not care about; but she made sure that as soon as I got hold of it all, I should get hold of it by the right end."

"In this way she began with the first verse of Genesis, and went straight through to the last verse of the Apocalypse¹; hard names, numbers, Levitical law, and all; and began again at Genesis the next day. If a name was hard, the better the exercise in pronunciation,—if a chapter was tiresome, the better lesson in patience,—if loathsome, the better lesson in faith that there was some use in its being so outspoken." "It is strange that of all the pieces of the Bible which my mother thus taught me, that which cost me most to learn, and that which was to my child's mind chiefly repulsive,—the 119th Psalm,²—has now become of all the most precious to me, in its overflowing and glorious passion of love for the Law of God, in opposition to the abuse of it by modern preachers of what they imagine to be His gospel."

"And truly, though I have picked up the elements of a little further knowledge,—in mathematics, meteorology, and the like, in after life,—and owe not a little to the teaching of many people, this maternal installation of my mind in this property of chapters, I count very confidently the most precious, and, on the whole, the one *essential* part of all my education."

"And for best and truest beginning of all blessings, I had been taught the perfect meaning of Peace, in thought, act, and word."

"I never had heard my father's or mother's voice once raised in any question with each other; nor seen an angry, or even slightly hurt or offended, glance, in the eye of either. I had never heard a servant scolded; nor even

¹ **Apocalypse**: Revelation.

² Beginning "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord."

suddenly, passionately, or in any severe manner blamed. I had never seen a moment's trouble or disorder in any household matter; nor anything whatever either done in a hurry, or undone¹ in due time." "I had never done any wrong that I knew of—beyond occasionally delaying the commitment to heart of some improving sentence, that I might watch a wasp on the window pane, or a bird in the cherry-tree; and I had never seen any grief."

"Next to this quite priceless gift of Peace, I had received the perfect understanding of the nature of Obedience and Faith. I obeyed word, or lifted finger, of father or mother, simply as a ship her helm; not only without idea of resistance, but receiving the direction as a part of my own life and force." "And my practice in Faith was soon complete: nothing was ever promised me that was not given, nothing ever threatened me that was not inflicted, and nothing ever told me that was not true."

"Peace, obedience, faith; these three for chief good; next to these, the habit of fixed attention with both eyes and mind—on which I will not further enlarge at this moment, this being the main practical faculty of my life, causing Mazzini² to say of me in conversation authentically reported, a year or two before his death, that I had 'the most analytic mind in Europe.' An opinion in which, so far as I am acquainted with Europe, I am myself entirely disposed to concur."

If such a training had great advantages, it also had its under side of detriment. Ruskin speaks frankly of the evil, and says at the close: "My judgment of right and

¹ Undone: here, in sense of not done.

² Mazzini (Mat-see'nee): a distinguished Italian patriot and writer; he died in 1872.

wrong, and powers of independent action, were left entirely undeveloped; because the bridle and blinkers were never taken off me. Children should have their times of being off duty, like soldiers." "But the ceaseless authority exercised over my youth left me, when cast out at last into the world, unable for some time to do more than drift with its vortices.¹" Meantime, while this home education was going on, Ruskin was getting the ideas which are awakened by travel. Every summer his father took a long vacation, or, more strictly speaking, a tour for orders, through half the English counties, and perhaps a visit to Scotland, the native land of the Ruskin family. This journey, which occupied a couple of months, was made either in a hired post-chaise and pair, or in a comfortable, old-fashioned chariot which Mr. Ruskin borrowed from his business partner.

"This mode of journeying was as fixed as that of our home life. We went from forty to fifty miles a day, starting always early enough in the morning to arrive comfortably to four-o'clock dinner. Generally, therefore, getting off at six o'clock, a stage or two was done before breakfast, with the dew on the grass, and first scent from the hawthorns; if in the course of the midday drive there were any gentleman's house to be seen,—or, better still, a lord's— or, best of all, a duke's,—my father baited the horses, and took my mother and me reverently through the state rooms; always speaking a little under our breath to the housekeeper, major domo,² or other authority in charge; and gleaning worshipfully what fragmentary illustrations of the history and domestic ways of the family might fall from their lips."

¹ **Vortices**: eddies.

² **Major domo**: steward or general manager.

"I thus saw nearly all the noblemen's houses in England; in reverent and healthy delight of uncovetous admiration, — perceiving, as soon as I could perceive any political truth at all, that it was probably much happier to live in a small house, and have Warwick Castle to be astonished at, than to live in Warwick Castle and have nothing to be astonished at; but that, at all events, it would not make Brunswick Square¹ more pleasantly habitable, to pull Warwick Castle down. And at this day, though I have kind invitations enough to visit America, I could not, even for a couple of months, live in a country so miserable as to possess no castles."

With the yearly excursions through the country, with home study, reading under various tutors of the neighborhood, attempts at poetry, and, later, bits of sketching, done not only during the summer vacations in England, but also during trips to the continent, Ruskin reached the age when he was to enter college. His acquirements were not great in the classics, and were still less in mathematics; but he had made pretty thorough acquaintance with several of the great English authors, he had fallen in love with Turner's pictures, as reproduced in Rogers's Italy, and he had learned to use his eyes, so that he was beginning to read with delight and profit that revelation of the hills and the sea which were to so deeply influence his whole future life and work.

Accordingly, in the autumn of 1836, Ruskin, accompanied by his father and mother, went up to Oxford to become a member of Christ Church, the favorite college of the English nobility. "There," he says, "I was entered

¹ An allusion to his first home, No. 54 Hunter Street, Brunswick Square, London.

as a gentleman-commoner¹ without further debate, and remember still, as if it were yesterday, the pride of first walking out of the Angel Hotel, and past University College, holding my father's arm, in my velvet cap and silk gown."

"Yes, good reader, the velvet and silk made a difference, not to my mother only, but to me! Quite one of the telling and weighty points in the home debates . . . had been that the commoner's gown [worn by the poorer class of students] was not only of ugly stuff, but had no flowing lines in it, and was virtually only a black rag tied to one's shoulders. One was twice a gownsman in a flowing gown."

"So little, indeed, am I disposed now in maturer years to deride these unphilosophical feelings, that instead of effacing distinctions of dress at the University (except for the boating clubs), I would fain have seen them extended into the entire social order of the country. I think that nobody but duchesses should be allowed to wear diamonds; and that lords should be known from common people by their stars, a quarter of a mile off; that every peasant girl should boast her country by some dainty ratification² of cap or bodice; and that in the towns a vintner³ should be known from a fishmonger by the cut of his jerkin.⁴"

A few months after the donning of the silk gown which gave rise to the above reflections, Ruskin entered on his college duties, which began each day with religious service

¹ Gentleman-commoner: one of the highest rank of students at Oxford, below the nobility, — one who takes his meals at the common college table, but supports himself.

² Ratification: here, perhaps, in sense of device.

³ Vintner: a wine-seller.

⁴ Jerkin: jacket.

in the choir of the cathedral used as a chapel by Christ Church College. "There," he says, "met every morning a congregation representing the best of what Britain had become, orderly, as the crew of a man-of-war, in the goodly ship of their temple. Every man in his place, according to his rank, age, and learning; every man of sense or heart there recognizing that he was either fulfilling, or being prepared to fulfil, the gravest duties required of Englishmen. None of us then conscious of any need or chance of change, least of all the stern captain, who with rounded brow and glittering dark eye, led in his old thunderous Latin the responses of the morning prayer."

"For all that I saw, and was made to think, in that cathedral choir, I am most thankful to this day."

"The influence on me of the next goodliest part of the college buildings,—the hall,—was of a different and curiously mixed character. Had it only been used, as it only ought to have been, for festivity and magnificence . . . the hall, like the cathedral, would have had an entirely salutary and beneficently solemnizing effect on me, hallowing to me my daily bread, . . . but the Abbot¹ allowed our hall to be used for 'collections.' The word is wholly abominable to my mind, whether as expressing extorted charities in church, or extracted knowledge in examination. 'Collections' in scholastic sense meant the college examination at the end of every term, at which the Abbot had the worse than bad taste to be present as our inquisitor, though he had never once presided at our table as our host. Of course the collective quantity of Greek possessed by all the undergraduate heads in hall was, to *him*, infinitesimal. Scornful at once, and vindictive, thunder-

¹ The Abbot: here, the Dean or head of the college.

ous always, more sullen and threatening as the day went on, he stalked with baleful emanation of Gorgonian¹ cold from dais² to door, and door to dais, of the majestic torture chamber,—vast as the great hall of Venice, but degraded now by the mean terrors, swallow-like under its eaves, of doleful creatures who had no counsel in them, except how to hide their crib³ at each fateful Abbot's transit. Of course *I* never used a crib, but I believe the Dean⁴ would rather I had used fifty, than borne the puzzled and hopeless aspect which I presented, towards the afternoon, over whatever I had to do. And as my Latin writing was, I suppose, the worst in the university,—as I never by any chance knew a first from a second future, or, even to the end of my Oxford career, could get into my head where the Pelasgi⁵ lived, or where the Heraclidæ returned from,—it may be imagined with what sort of countenance the Dean gave me his first and second fingers to shake at our parting, or with what comfort I met the inquiries of my father and mother as to the extent to which I was, in college opinion, carrying all before me."

When it came, however, to essay-writing, with the reading of the same in public, the case was different. Here young Ruskin felt that he could distinguish himself. The outcome of his painstaking effort was somewhat surprising. "I read my essay, I have reason to believe, not ungracefully; and descended from the rostrum to receive—as I doubted not—the thanks of the gentlemen-commoners for this creditable presentment of that body.

¹ *Gorgonian*: terrific. ² *Dais*: here, a platform at the end of the room.

³ *Crib*: a literal translation of a classic author,—a "pony."

⁴ *Dean*: this title is exclusively attached to the headship of Christ Church College; Ruskin apparently uses Abbot as synonymous with it.

⁵ *Pelasgi* and *Heraclidæ*: ancient Greek races.

"Not in envy truly, but in fiery disdain, varied in expression through every form and manner of the English language . . . they explained to me that I had committed grossest *lèse-majesté*¹ against the order of gentlemen-commoners; that no gentleman-commoner's essay ought ever to contain more than twelve lines, with four words in each; and that even indulging to my folly, and conceit, and want of *savoir faire*,² the impropriety of writing an essay with any meaning in it, like vulgar students — the thoughtlessness and audacity of writing one that would take at least a quarter of an hour to read, and then reading it all, might for this once be forgiven to such a greenhorn, but that Coventry³ wasn't the word for the place I should be sent to if ever I did such a thing again."

On his twenty-first birthday, being then in his last year at Oxford, Ruskin's father made him a present of a drawing by Turner, and also \$1000 a year for spending money, of which the young man almost immediately spent \$350 for a little water-color by Turner, sixteen inches by nine, representing the Welsh castle and village of Harlech. Shortly after this, his health began to fail. He was attacked with a cough attended by raising of blood, and was ordered by the doctors to spend the winter in Italy. It proved to be the end of his college life. Looking back to it, he says, "Oxford taught me as much Greek and Latin as she could; and though I think she might also have told me that fritillaries⁴ grew in Iffley⁵ meadow, it

¹ *Lèse-majesté*: treason.

² *Savoir faire*: good breeding.

³ *Coventry*: "to send to Coventry," to cut off from all social intercourse, — to "boycott."

⁴ *Fritillary*: a kind of lily, having bright red or yellow flowers.

⁵ *Iffley*: a delightful suburb of Oxford.

was better that she left me to find them for myself, than that she should have told me, as nowadays she would, that the painting on them was only to amuse the midges."

Of the journey to Italy, Ruskin says, "However dearly bought, the permission to cease reading,¹ and put what strength was left into my sketching again, gave healthy stimulus to all faculties which had been latently progressive in me; and the sketch-book and rulers were prepared for this journey on hitherto unexampled stateliness of method."

The young man went the usual round, but refused to see many things — pictures and statuary — in the manner prescribed by the guide-books, daring even to call frescos bad which Murray told him he must believe good, and to pronounce good what all orthodox critics of art were agreed was altogether bad, and therefore not to be looked at. After this there were travels in France, with more sketches, and then a quiet settling down in a little country village in England, with some painting done in imitation of Turner. Finally, in the summer of 1840, Ruskin was introduced to the artist himself whom he had long admired at a distance as "the greatest of the age." "I found in him," he says, "a somewhat eccentric, keen-mannered, matter-of-fact, English-minded — gentleman: good-natured evidently, bad-tempered evidently, hating humbug of all sorts, shrewd, perhaps a little selfish, highly intellectual, the powers of the mind not brought out with any delight in their manifestation, or intention of display, but flashing out occasionally in a word or a look."

Turner had some friends, but many enemies, among the critics, who called his pictures flimsy, tawdry, and meaning-

¹ Reading: in the sense of study.

less. In Ruskin, the old man — for he was then old — found an enthusiastic champion. In 1843 Ruskin published, anonymously, the first volume of his "Modern Painters," in defence of his friend. . It came too late to give pleasure to the great painter, at whom the world had long scoffed, for his health had suddenly given way, and "he was dead as an artist, and dying as a man." The volume was received with storms of abuse from those whose prejudices it assailed and mercilessly uprooted. "Blackwood's Magazine" was especially severe on the unknown writer who had had the audacity to tell the English public that their art critic guides were but "blind leaders of the blind." But the "Oxford Graduate," as he signed himself, was so far from being silenced by the theatrical thunder of "Blackwood" that in the next edition he solicited for the editor of that periodical "the respect due to honest, hopeless, helpless imbecility."

Ruskin spent a good part of twenty years of labor on this book. It gradually expanded from a modest little volume into a vast treatise on the principles of all art. Of it he said, "It differs from most books, that it has not been written either for fame, or for money, or for conscience' sake, but of necessity."

Meanwhile he was also busy in many ways and on other works, notably on "The Seven Lamps of Architecture" and "The Stones of Venice." In both his aim was to show that "all great architecture is the exponent of national virtue, and all debased architecture that of national vice and shame." He also found time to give several courses of lectures on architecture and painting, in one of which, delivered at Edinburgh in 1853, he reaffirms his judgment of Turner in the following words: "I did not

come here to tell you of my beliefs or conjectures; I came here to tell you the truth which I have given fifteen years of my life to ascertain, that this man, this Turner, of whom you have known so little while he was living among you, will one day take his place beside Shakespeare and Verulam,¹ in the annals of the light of England. Yes: beside Shakespeare and Verulam, a third star in that central constellation, round which, in the astronomy of intellect, all other stars make their circuit. By Shakespeare, humanity was unsealed to you; by Verulam, the *principles* of nature; and by Turner, her *aspect*. All these were sent to unlock one of the gates of light, and to unlock it for the first time. But of all the three, though not the greatest, Turner was the most unprecedented in his work. Bacon did what Aristotle had attempted; Shakespeare did perfectly what Æschylus did partially; but none before Turner had lifted the veil from the face of nature; the majesty of the hills and forests had received no interpretation, and the clouds passed unrecorded from the face of heaven which they adorned, and of the earth to which they ministered.”²

After 1860 a great change took place in the bent of Mr. Ruskin's mind. Since then he has devoted his pen mainly to books on social and educational subjects, of which latter class “Sesame and Lilies,” and a series of monthly “Letters to the Workmen and Laborers of Great Britain,” begun in 1871 and still continued, are characteristic examples.³

The purpose of these letters may best be seen in the organization called the Guild or Company of St. George,

¹ Verulam: Lord Bacon.

² Ruskin's Lecture on Architecture and Painting, 1853. (Lecture III.)

³ “Fors Clavigera, Letters to the Workmen and Laborers of Great Britain.” [Fors: Force, Fortitude, Fortune. Clavigera: the club-bearer (Deed), the key-bearer (Patience), the nail-bearer (Law). See Letter II.]

established at Abbey Dale, in the vicinity of Sheffield in 1871.

Ruskin had long deplored the effects of competition in trade and labor. If not exactly the root of all social evil, he believed it to be at least the source of much of it. He saw the ever-increasing misery, squalor, and crime of the large towns, and the steady depopulation of the agricultural districts through the constant drift of young men to the cities. He saw, too, their ultimate degradation and despair through hopeless combat against the forces which crushed two out of three in order that the third might succeed; and his heart was moved with compassion. Carlyle, seeing the same struggle, had said with grim irony that the only way to abolish poverty in England was to have a grand annual hunt, in which all well-to-do people should join in shooting down those who could not get on in the world and then barrel up the game for the support of the army and navy.

But Ruskin, though he sat as a disciple at Carlyle's feet, could not relieve his mind with a bitter jest. "For my part," said he, "I will put up with this state of things passively not an hour longer. I am not an unselfish person nor an evangelical one; I have no particular pleasure in doing good; neither do I dislike doing it so much as to expect to be rewarded for it in another world. But I simply cannot paint, nor read, nor look at minerals, nor do anything else that I like, and the very light of the morning sky, when there is any, — which is seldom nowadays, near London, — has become hateful to me, because of the misery that I know of, and see signs of where I know it not, which no imagination can interpret too bitterly. Therefore, as I have said, I will endure it no longer qui-

etly ; but henceforward, with any few or many who will help, do my poor best to abate this misery." This resolve did not evaporate in well-chosen words. Ruskin's sympathy was pocket-felt as well as heart-felt ; and on Christmas Day, 1871, he gave \$35,000,¹ one-tenth of all he was then worth, to carry out his design of purchasing one or more tracts of land on which to plant a community which should begin its own regeneration and that of England. Whether practical and wisely planned or not, the motive at least was noble, and by that motive the giver if not his work should be judged. It would be interesting to know how such a community would compare in results with that of the model manufacturing village of Saltaire, founded by Sir Titus Salt some fifty miles further north in the same shire [Yorkshire], or with that of Pullman in Illinois, built on a similar plan and for a like purpose, namely, the health, comfort, and prosperity of the men engaged in the construction of the Pullman cars. It is difficult, however, if not impossible, to get definite statistics of Mr. Ruskin's experiment, which, perhaps like some other spiritual conceptions, is slow to "materialize" before the eyes of an unbelieving world. But the man's downright earnestness can no more be gainsaid on that account than could the Apostle Paul, when his impassioned preaching made Festus cry out that he was mad.

In Ruskin's case, as in that of the Apostle to the gentiles, it is the madness of self-forgetfulness, bad enough doubtless, but certainly not the most dangerous kind for the world. In fact, as one biographer has said, "Ruskin's generosity has been a life-long characteristic. His liberality at times appears to have approached prodigality, gifts

¹ He subsequently added as much more, making \$70,000 in all.

flowing forth in fifties, hundreds, and thousands of pounds." Indeed, out of a fortune of nearly \$800,000 inherited from his father, the greater part has been spent in endowing museums, opening art schools, establishing improved dwelling-houses for the poor, aiding young men and women to get educations, and helping the suffering; so that to-day, after deducting his gift to St. George's Company, Mr. Ruskin has only about \$60,000 left for himself, or considerably less than one-twelfth of his original wealth.

Yet so far from getting commendation, Ruskin has chiefly met mockery, which he has not infrequently returned with interest. "Because," he says, "I have passed my life in alms-giving, not in fortune-hunting; because I have labored always for the honor of others, not of my own, and have chosen rather to make men look to Turner and Luini,¹ than to form or exhibit the skill of my own hand; because I have lowered my rents, and assured the comfortable lives of my poor tenants, instead of taking from them all I could force for the roofs they needed; because I love a wood walk better than a London street; and would rather watch a seagull fly than shoot it, and rather hear a thrush sing than eat it; finally, because I never disobeyed my mother, because I have honored all women with solemn worship, and have been kind even to the unthankful and the evil; therefore, the hacks of English art and literature wag their heads at me."

But it is time to come back to St. George's Company.

¹ Luini (Bernardino): an eminent Italian painter (pupil of Leonardo Da Vinci) of the latter part of the fifteenth and first of the sixteenth century. His principal works are at Milan. In "The Queen of the Air" Ruskin contrasts Luini with Turner.

In the spring of 1877, a few Sheffield workmen hired thirteen acres, at Abbey Dale, from the company at a rental of three per cent on cost, and the new community began its existence; the understanding being that all profits from the cultivation of the land were to be spent in future improvements, and that such improvements should tend to lower the rental instead of increasing it, as is usually the case.

Three material things are named as essential objects to be labored for: these are Pure Air, Water, and Earth. On these the master of St. George's lays especial emphasis. Pure air, in contrast to that of manufacturing towns, black with irritating coal-smoke and poisonous with chemical gases; Pure water, as opposed to streams so reeking with filth and refuse that they have become simply open sewers;¹ Pure earth, as compared with soil trampled deep with coal ashes, and heaped with broken pottery, cinders, and slag. Next, three immaterial things: Admiration, Hope, and Love. "Admiration — the power of discerning and taking delight in what is beautiful in visible form, and lovely in human character. Hope — the recognition, by true foresight, of better things to be reached hereafter, whether by ourselves or others. Love, both of family and neighbors, faithful and satisfied."

With these essentials to start with, says Ruskin, "we will try to make some small piece of English ground beautiful, peaceful, and fruitful. We will have no steam-engines upon it, and no railroads; we will have no untended or unthought-of creatures on it; none wretched but the

¹ **Pure water:** the once beautiful streams of rural England are now evil-looking and evil-smelling. Not long ago a woman fell into one of them and was shortly after taken out dead; not drowned, but *poisoned*!

sick ; none idle but the dead. We will have no liberty upon it ; but instant obedience to known law and appointed persons : no equality upon it ; but recognition of every betterness that we can find, and reprobation of every worseness. When we want to go anywhere, we will go there quietly and safely, not at forty miles an hour, in the risk of our lives ; when we want to carry anything anywhere, we will carry it either on the backs of beasts, or on our own, or in carts or boats ; we will have plenty of flowers and vegetables in our gardens, plenty of corn and grass in our fields, — and few bricks."

". . . Whatever piece of land we begin work upon we shall treat thoroughly at once, putting unlimited manual labor on it until we have every foot of it under as strict care as a flower garden : and the laborers shall be paid sufficient, unchanging wages ; and their children educated in agricultural schools inland, and naval schools by the sea, the indispensable first condition of such education being that the boys learn either to ride or to sail, the girls to spin, weave, and sew, and at a proper age to cook all ordinary food exquisitely ; the youths of both sexes to be disciplined daily in the strictest practice of vocal music ; and for morality, to be taught gentleness to all brute creatures, finished courtesy to each other, to speak truth with rigid care, and to obey orders with the precision of slaves. Then, as they grow older, they are to learn the natural history of the place they live in ; to know Latin, boys and girls both, and the history of five cities, — Athens, Rome, Venice, Florence, and London."

". . . In the history of the five cities I have named, they shall learn, so far as they can understand, what has been beautifully and bravely done ; and they shall know

the lives of the heroes and heroines, in truth and naturalness; and shall be taught to remember the greatest of them on the days of their birth and death, so that the year shall have its full calendar of reverent memory. And on every day part of their morning service shall be a song in honor of the hero whose birthday it is, and part of the evening service a song of triumph for the fair death of one whose birthday it is; and in their first learning of notes they shall be taught the great purpose of music, which is to say a thing that you mean deeply, in the strongest and clearest possible way; and they shall never be taught to sing what they don't mean. They shall be able to sing merrily when they are happy, and earnestly when they are sad."

"... And these things are to be done not by competitive examination, but under absolute prohibition of all violent and strained effort — most of all envious or anxious effort — in any exercise of body and mind, each one keeping these principles always in view:

"I. To do your own work well, whether it be for life or death.

"II. To help other people at theirs, when you can, and seek to avenge no injury.

"III. To be sure you can obey good laws before you seek to alter bad ones."

Such, on the verge of his seventieth year, is John Ruskin's ideal of what England should aim at. Whether he is partly right or altogether wrong is for the reader to judge.

That he has the courage to grapple with such a problem proves at least that he, for one, is resolved to do his part. He finds men, as he believes, slaves to machines,

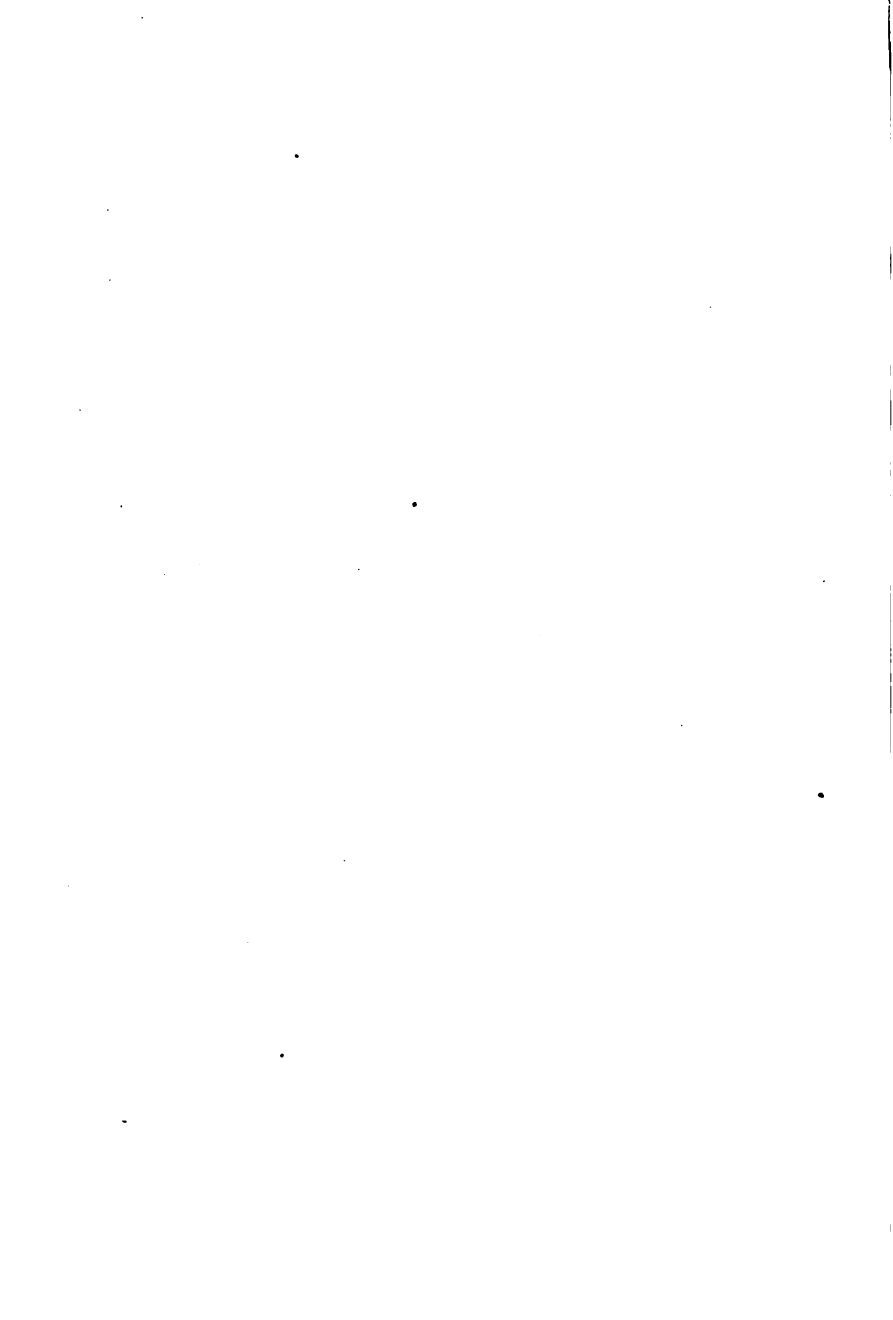
slaves to a heartless system of cut-throat competition, slaves to a joyless routine of mechanical labor, divided and subdivided until there are no entire workmen to be found, but only fractions, "so that all the little piece of intelligence that is left in a man is not enough to make a pin, or a nail, but exhausts itself in making the point of a pin, or the head of a nail."

His object is to lift the artisans of England out of their bondage and degradation, both for their own good and for the welfare and safety of the state. Whether we agree with him in any degree or not, no one can see "that spare, stooping figure, with rough-hewn kindly face, and clear deep eyes," still less can one hear his earnest unstudied eloquence of speech, without being drawn into sympathy with the man, though at the same time we cannot help regretting that Ruskin, like Hamlet,¹ has felt called to take up a task so perilous — not, indeed, too great for his generous purpose, but utterly beyond his saddened heart and failing strength.

D. H. M.

¹ "The time is out of joint : — O cursed spite,
That ever I was born to set it right !"

— *Hamlet*, Act I. Scene 5.



BOOKS AND READING.¹

FIRST LECTURE.

HOWEVER good you may be, you have faults; however dull you may be, you can find out what some of them are; and however slight they may be, you had better make some—not too painful, but patient—effort to get quit of them. And so far as you have confidence in me at all, trust me for this, that how many soever you may find or fancy your faults to be, there are only two that are of real consequence—Idleness and Cruelty. Perhaps you may be proud. Well, we can get much good out of pride, if only it be not religious. Perhaps you may be vain: it is highly probable; and very pleasant for the people who like to praise you. Perhaps you are a little envious: that is really very shocking; but then—so is everybody else. Perhaps, also, you are a little malicious, which I am truly concerned to hear, but should probably only the more, if I knew you, enjoy your conversation. But whatever else you may be, you must not be useless, and you must not be cruel. If there is any one point which, in six thousand years of thinking about right and wrong, wise and good men have agreed upon, or successively by experience discovered, it is that God dislikes idle and cruel people more

¹ From "Sesame * and Lilies" (Preface).

* Sesame is a kind of grain used in the East for food, but here it means a talisman or magic word which opens the doors of locked treasure-houses—royal treasure-houses of knowledge and thought.

than any other ;—that His first order is, “Work while you have light” ; and His second, “Be merciful while you have mercy.”

“Work while you have light,” especially while you have the light of morning. There are few things more wonderful to me than that old people never tell young ones how precious their youth is. They sometimes sentimentally regret their own earlier days ; sometimes prudently forget them ; often foolishly rebuke the young, often more foolishly indulge, often most foolishly thwart and restrain ; but scarcely ever warn or watch them. Remember, then, that I, at least, have warned *you*, that the happiness of your life, and its power, and its part and rank on earth or in heaven, depend on the way you pass your days now. They are not to be sad days ; far from that, the first duty of young people is to be delighted and delightful ; but they are to be in the deepest sense solemn days. There is no solemnity so deep, to a rightly-thinking creature, as that of dawn. But not only in that beautiful sense, but in all their character and method, they are to be solemn days. Take your Latin dictionary, and look out “*sollennis*,”¹ and fix the sense of the word well in your mind, and remember that every day of your early life is ordaining irrevocably, for good or evil, the custom and practice of your soul ; ordaining either sacred customs of dear and lovely recurrence, or trenching deeper and deeper the furrows for seed of sorrow. Now, therefore, see that no day passes in which you do not make yourself a somewhat

¹ *Sollennis* (from *sollus*, the whole, and *annus*, year) : —

1. Yearly ; hence relating to appointed yearly solemnities.
2. A solemn custom.
3. Usual, customary, habitual.

better creature; and in order to do that, find out, first, what you are now. Do not think vaguely about it; take pen and paper, and write down as accurate a description of yourself as you can, with the date to it. If you dare not do so, find out why you dare not, and try to get strength of heart enough to look yourself fairly in the face, in mind as well as body. I do not doubt but that the mind is a less pleasant thing to look at than the face, and for that very reason it needs more looking at; so always have two mirrors on your toilet table, and see that with proper care you dress body and mind before them daily. After the dressing is once over for the day, think no more about it: as your hair will blow about your ears, so your temper and thoughts will get ruffled with the day's work, and may need, sometimes, twice dressing; but I don't want you to carry about a mental pocket-comb; only to be smooth braided always in the morning.

Write down then, frankly, what you are, or, at least, what you think yourself, not dwelling upon those inevitable faults which I have just told you are of little consequence, and which the action of a right life will shake or smooth away; but that you may determine to the best of your intelligence what you are good for, and can be made into. You will find that the mere resolve not to be useless, and the honest desire to help other people, will, in the quickest and delicatest ways, improve yourself. In music especially you will soon find what personal benefit there is in being serviceable: it is probable that, however limited your powers, you have voice and ear enough to sustain a note of moderate compass in a concerted piece;—that, then, is the first thing to make sure you can do. Get your voice disciplined and clear, and think only of

accuracy ; never of effect or expression : if you have any soul worth expressing it will show itself in your singing ; but most likely there are very few feelings in you, at present, needing any particular expression ; and the one thing you have to do is to make a clear-voiced little instrument of yourself, which other people can entirely depend upon for the note wanted. So, in drawing, as soon as you can set down the right shape of anything, and thereby explain its character to another person, or make the look of it clear and interesting to a child, you will begin to enjoy the art vividly for its own sake, and all your habits of mind and powers of memory will gain precision : but if you only try to make showy drawings for praise, or petty ones for amusement, your drawing will have little of real interest for you, and no educational power whatever.

Then, besides this more delicate work, resolve to do every day some that is useful in the vulgar sense. Learn first thoroughly the economy of the kitchen ; the good and bad qualities of every common article of food, and the simplest and best modes of their preparation.

You must be to the best of your strength usefully employed during the greater part of the day, so that you may be able at the end of it to say, as proudly as any peasant, that you have not eaten the bread of idleness. Then, secondly, I said, you are not to be cruel. Perhaps you think there is no chance of your being so ; and indeed I hope it is not likely that you should be deliberately unkind to any creature ; but unless you are deliberately kind to every creature, you will often be cruel to many.

Observe, therefore, carefully in this matter : there are degrees of pain, as degrees of faultfulness, which are altogether conquerable, and which seem to be merely forms of

wholesome trial or discipline. Your fingers tingle when you go out on a frosty morning, and are all the warmer afterwards; your limbs are weary with wholesome work, and lie down in the pleasanter rest; you are tried for a little while by having to wait for some promised good, and it is all the sweeter when it comes. But you cannot carry the trial past a certain point. Let the cold fasten on your hand in an extreme degree, and your fingers will moulder from their sockets. Fatigue yourself, but once, to utter exhaustion, and to the end of life you shall not recover the former vigor of your frame. Let heart-sickness pass beyond a certain bitter point, and the heart loses its life forever.

Now, the very definition of evil is in this irremediableness. It means sorrow, or sin, which ends in death; and assuredly, as far as we know, or can conceive, there are many conditions both of pain and sin which cannot but so end. Of course we are ignorant and blind creatures, and we cannot know what seeds of good may be in present suffering, or present crime; but with what we cannot know, we are not concerned. It is conceivable that murderers and liars may in some distant world be exalted into a higher humanity than they could have reached without homicide or falsehood; but the contingency is not one by which our actions should be guided. There is, indeed, a better hope that the beggar, who lies at our gates in misery, may, within gates of pearl be comforted; but the Master, whose words are our only authority for thinking so, never Himself inflicted disease as a blessing, nor sent away the hungry unfed, or the wounded unhealed.

Life being very short, and the quiet hours of it few, we ought to waste none of them in reading valueless

books ; and valuable books should, in a civilized country, be within the reach of every one, printed in excellent form, for a just price ; but not in any vile, vulgar, or, by reason of smallness of type, physically injurious form, at a vile price. For we none of us need many books, and those which we need ought to be clearly printed, on the best paper, and strongly bound. And though we are, indeed, now, a wretched and poverty-stricken nation, and hardly able to keep soul and body together, still, as no person in decent circumstances would put on his table confessedly bad wine, or bad meat, without being ashamed, so he need not have on his shelves ill-printed or loosely and wretchedly stitched books. I would urge upon every young man, as the beginning of his due and wise provision for his household, to obtain as soon as he can, by the severest economy, a restricted, serviceable, and steadily — however slowly — increasing, series of books for use through life ; making his little library, of all the furniture in his room, the most studied and decorative piece ; every volume having its assigned place, like a little statue in its niche, and one of the earliest and strictest lessons to the children of the house being how to turn the pages of their own literary possessions lightly and deliberately, with no chance of tearing or dogs' ears.

Now,¹ I want to speak to you about the way we read books, or could, or should read them. A grave subject, you will say ; and a wide one ! Yes ; so wide that I shall make no effort to touch the compass of it. I will try only to bring before you a few simple thoughts about reading, which press themselves upon me every day more deeply, as I watch the course of the public

¹ From "Sesame and Lilies" (Sesame — Kings' Treasures).

mind with respect to our daily enlarging means of education, and the answeringly wider spreading, on the levels, of the irrigation of literature. It happens that I have practically some connection with schools for different classes of youth; and I receive many letters from parents respecting the education of their children. In the mass of these letters, I am always struck by the precedence which the idea of a "position in life" takes above all other thoughts in the parents'—more especially in the mothers'—minds. "The education befitting such and such a *station in life*"—this is the phrase, this the object, always. They never seek, as far as I can make out, an education good in itself: the conception of abstract rightness in training rarely seems reached by the writers. But an education "which shall keep a good coat on my son's back; an education which shall enable him to ring with confidence the visitors' bell at double-belled doors;¹—education which shall result ultimately in establishment of a double-belled door to his own house; in a word, which shall lead to 'advancement in life.'" It never seems to occur to the parents that there may be an education which, in itself, *is* advancement in Life;—that any other than that may perhaps be advancement in Death; and that this essential education might be more easily got, or given, than they fancy, if they set about it in the right way; while it is for no price, and by no favor, to be got, if they set about it in the wrong.

Indeed, among the ideas most prevalent and effective in

¹ **Double-belled doors:** many first-class London houses have double bells; one for visitors, the other for persons calling on business. In addition, there is a basement bell for the use of servants, provision-dealers, and the like.

the mind of this busiest of countries, I suppose the first, at least that which is confessed with the greatest frankness, and put forward as the fittest stimulus to youthful exertion—is this of “advancement in life.” My main purpose this evening is to determine, with you, what this idea practically includes, and what it should include.

Practically, then, at present, “advancement in life” means becoming conspicuous in life;—obtaining a position which shall be acknowledged by others to be respectable or honorable. We do not understand by this advancement, in general, the mere making of money, but the being known to have made it; not the accomplishment of any great aim, but the being seen to have accomplished it. In a word, we mean the gratification of our thirst for applause. That thirst, if the last infirmity of noble minds, is also the first infirmity of weak ones; and, on the whole, the strongest impulsive influence of average humanity: the greatest efforts of the race have always been traceable to the love of praise, as its greatest catastrophes to the love of pleasure.

I am not about to attack or defend this impulse. I want you only to feel how it lies at the root of effort; especially of all modern effort. It is the gratification of vanity which is, with us, the stimulus of toil, and balm of repose; so closely does it touch the very springs of life, that the wounding of our vanity is always spoken of (and truly) as in its measure *mortal*; we call it “mortification,” using the same expression which we should apply to a gangrenous and incurable bodily hurt. And although few of us may be physicians enough to recognize the various effect of this passion upon health and energy, I believe most honest men know and would at once acknowledge, its

leading power with them as a motive. The seaman does not commonly desire to be made captain only because he knows he can manage the ship better than any other sailor on board. He wants to be made captain that he may be *called* captain. The clergyman does not usually want to be made a bishop only because he believes no other hand can, as firmly as his, direct the diocese through its difficulties. He wants to be made bishop primarily that he may be called "My Lord."¹ And a prince does not usually desire to enlarge, or a subject to gain, a kingdom, because he believes that no one else can as well serve the state upon the throne; but, briefly, because he wishes to be addressed as "Your Majesty," by as many lips as may be brought to such utterance.

This, then, being the main idea of advancement in life, the force of it applies, for all of us, according to our station, particularly to that secondary result of such advancement which we call "getting into good society." We want to get into good society, not that we may have it, but that we may be seen in it; and our notion of its goodness depends primarily on its conspicuousness.

Will you pardon me if I pause for a moment to put what I fear you may think an impertinent question? I never can go on with an address unless I feel, or know, that my audience are either with me or against me: (I do not much care which, in beginning;) but I must know where they are; and I would fain find out, at this instant, whether you think I am putting the motives of popular action too low. I am resolved to-night, to state them low enough to be admitted as probable; for whenever, in my

¹ "My Lord": as a bishop of the Church of England is a peer and holds a seat in the House of Lords, he has the title of "lord."

writings on Political Economy, I assume that a little honesty, or generosity, — or what used to be called “virtue” — may be calculated upon as a human motive of action, people always answer me, saying, “You must not calculate on that: that is not in human nature: you must not assume anything to be common to men but acquisitiveness and jealousy; no other feeling ever has influence on them, except accidentally, and in matters out of the way of business.” I begin accordingly to-night low down in the scale of motives; but I must know if you think me right in doing so. Therefore, let me ask those who admit the love of praise to be usually the strongest motive in men’s minds in seeking advancement, and the honest desire of doing any kind of duty to be an entirely secondary one, to hold up their hands. (*About a dozen of hands held up — the audience partly not being sure the lecturer is serious, and partly shy of expressing opinion.*) I am quite serious — I really do want to know what you think; however, I can judge by putting the reverse question. Will those who think that duty is generally the first, and love of praise the second motive, hold up their hands? (*One hand reported to have been held up, behind the lecturer.*) Very good; I see you are with me, and that you think I have not begun too near the ground. Now, without teasing you by putting farther question, I venture to assume that you will admit duty as at least a secondary or tertiary¹ motive. You think that the desire of doing something useful, or obtaining some real good, is indeed an existent collateral idea, though a secondary one, in most men’s desire of advancement. You will grant that moderately honest men desire place and office, at least in some meas-

¹ Tertiary: third in order.

ure, for the sake of their beneficent power; and would wish to associate rather with sensible and well-informed persons than with fools and ignorant persons, whether they are seen in the company of the sensible ones or not. And finally, without being troubled by repetition of any common truisms about the preciousness of friends, and the influence of companions, you will admit, doubtless, that according to the sincerity of our desire that our friends may be true, and our companions wise,—and in proportion to the earnestness and discretion with which we choose both, will be the general chances of our happiness and usefulness.

But, granting that we had both the will and the sense to choose our friends well, how few of us have the power! or, at least, how limited, for most, is the sphere of choice! Nearly all our associations are determined by chance or necessity; and restricted within a narrow circle. We cannot know whom we would; and those whom we know, we cannot have at our side when we most need them. All the higher circles of human intelligence are, to those beneath, only momentarily and partially open. We may, by good fortune, obtain a glimpse of a great poet, and hear the sound of his voice; or put a question to a man of science, and be answered good-humoredly. We may intrude ten minutes' talk on a cabinet minister, answered probably with words worse than silence, being deceptive; or snatch, once or twice in our lives, the privilege of throwing a bouquet in the path of a Princess, or arresting the kind glance of a Queen. And yet these momentary chances we covet; and spend our years, and passions, and powers in pursuit of little more than these: while, meantime, there is a society continually open to us, of people

who will talk to us as long as we like, whatever our rank or occupation ; — talk to us in the best words they can choose, and with thanks if we listen to them. And this society, because it is so numerous and so gentle, — and can be kept waiting round us all day long, not to grant audience, but to gain it ; — kings and statesmen lingering patiently in those plainly furnished and narrow ante-rooms, our bookcase shelves, — we make no account of that company, — perhaps never listen to a word they would say, all day long !

You may tell me, perhaps, or think within yourselves, that the apathy with which we regard this company of the noble, who are praying us to listen to them, and the passion with which we pursue the company, probably of the ignoble, who despise us, or have nothing to teach us, are grounded in this, — that we can see the faces of the living men, and it is themselves, and not their sayings, with which we desire to become familiar. But it is not so. Suppose you never were to see their faces ; — suppose you could be put behind a screen in the statesman's cabinet, or the prince's chamber, would you not be glad to listen to their words, though you were forbidden to advance beyond the screen ? And when the screen is only a little less, folded in two, instead of four, and you can be hidden behind the cover of the two boards that bind a book, and listen, all day long, not to the casual talk, but to the studied, determined, chosen addresses of the wisest of men ; — this station of audience, and honorable privy council, you despise !

But perhaps you will say that it is because the living people talk of things that are passing, and are of immediate interest to you, that you desire to hear them. Nay ;

that cannot be so, for the living people will themselves tell you about passing matters much better in their writings than in their careless talk. But I admit that this motive does influence you, so far as you prefer those rapid and ephemeral writings to slow and enduring writings — books, properly so called. For all books are divisible into two classes, the books of the hour, and the books of all time. Mark this distinction — it is not one of quality only. It is not merely the bad book that does not last, and the good one that does. It is a distinction of species. There are good books for the hour, and good ones for all time ; bad books for the hour, and bad ones for all time. I must define the two kinds before I go farther.

The good book of the hour, then, — I do not speak of the bad ones — is simply the useful or pleasant talk of some person whom you cannot otherwise converse with, printed for you. Very useful often, telling you what you need to know ; very pleasant often, as a sensible friend's present talk would be. These bright accounts of travels ; good-humored and witty discussions of question ; lively or pathetic story-telling in the form of novel ; firm fact-telling, by the real agents concerned in the events of passing history ; — all these books of the hour, multiplying among us as education becomes more general, are a peculiar characteristic and possession of the present age ; we ought to be entirely thankful for them, and entirely ashamed of ourselves if we make no good use of them. But we make the worst possible use, if we allow them to usurp the place of true books : for, strictly speaking, they are not books at all, but merely letters or newspapers in good print. Our friend's letter may be delightful or necessary to-day : whether worth keeping or not, is to be considered. The

newspaper may be entirely proper at breakfast time, but assuredly it is not reading for all day. So, though bound up in a volume, the long letter which gives you so pleasant an account of the inns, and roads, and weather last year at such a place, or which tells you that amusing story, or gives you the real circumstances of such and such events, however valuable for occasional reference, may not be, in the real sense of the word, a "book" at all, nor, in the real sense, to be "read." A book is essentially not a talked thing, but a written thing; and written, not with the view of mere communication, but of permanence. The book of talk is printed only because its author cannot speak to thousands of people at once; if he could, he would — the volume is mere *multiplication* of his voice. You cannot talk to your friend in India; if you could, you would; you write instead: that is mere *conveyance* of voice. But a book is written, not to multiply the voice merely, not to carry it merely, but to preserve it. The author has something to say which he perceives to be true and useful, or helpfully beautiful. So far as he knows, no one has yet said it; so far as he knows, no one else can say it. He is bound to say it, clearly and melodiously if he may; clearly, at all events. In the sum of his life he finds this to be the thing, or group of things, manifest to him; — this the piece of true knowledge, or sight, which his share of sunshine and earth has permitted him to seize. He would fain set it down for ever; engrave it on rock, if he could; saying, "This is the best of me; for the rest, I ate, and drank, and slept, loved, and hated, like another; my life was as the vapor, and is not; but this I saw and knew: this, if anything of mine, is worth your memory." That is his "writing"; it is, in his small human way, and with what-

ever degree of true inspiration is in him, his inscription or scripture. That is a "Book."

Perhaps you think no books were ever so written?

But, again I ask you, do you at all believe in honesty, or at all in kindness? or do you think there is never any honesty or benevolence in wise people? None of us, I hope, are so unhappy as to think that. Well, whatever bit of a wise man's work is honestly and benevolently done, that bit is his book, or his piece of art. It is mixed always with evil fragments — ill-done, redundant, affected work. But if you read rightly, you will easily discover the true bits, and those *are* the book.

Now books of this kind have been written in all ages by their greatest men; — by great leaders, great statesmen, and great thinkers. These are all at your choice; and life is short. You have heard as much before; — yet have you measured and mapped out this short life and its possibilities? Do you know, if you read this, that you cannot read that — that what you lose to-day you cannot gain to-morrow? Will you go and gossip with your housemaid, or your stable-boy, when you may talk with queens and kings; or flatter yourselves that it is with any worthy consciousness of your own claims to respect that you jostle with the common crowd for *entrée*¹ here, and audience there, when all the while this eternal court is open to you, with its society wide as the world, multitudinous as its days, the chosen, and the mighty, of every place and time? Into that you may enter always; in that you may take fellowship and rank according to your wish; from that, once entered into it, you can never be outcast but by your own fault; by your aristocracy of companionship

¹ *Entrée*: entrance, admission.

there, your own inherent aristocracy will be assuredly tested, and the motives with which you strive to take high place in the society of the living, measured, as to all the truth and sincerity that are in them, by the place you desire to take in this company of the Dead.

"The place you desire," and the place you *fit yourself for*, I must also say; because, observe, this court of the past differs from all living aristocracy in this:—it is open to labor and to merit, but to nothing else. No wealth will bribe, no name overawe, no artifice deceive, the guardian of those Elysian¹ gates. In the deep sense, no vile or vulgar person ever enters there. At the portières² of that silent Faubourg St. Germain,³ there is but brief question, "Do you deserve to enter?" "Pass. Do you ask to be the companion of nobles? Make yourself noble, and you shall be. Do you long for the conversation of the wise? Learn to understand it, and you shall hear it. But on other terms?—no. If you will not rise to us, we cannot stoop to you. The living lord may assume courtesy, the living philosopher explain his thought to you with considerable pain; but here we neither feign nor interpret; you must rise to the level of our thoughts if you would be gladdened by them, and share our feelings, if you would recognize our presence."

This, then, is what you have to do, and I admit that it is much. You must, in a word, love these people, if you are

¹ **Elysian**: pertaining to Elysium, the name given by the Greeks to the abode of the blessed after death. In Paris, the Elysian Fields is a fashionable quarter of the city.

² **Portières**: here, doors or gates to mansions, for the use of carriages.

³ **Faubourg St. Germain** (Fo'boor San Zhayr'man): a part of Paris in which the nobility formerly resided. It is still the favorite quarter with their descendants.

to be among them. No ambition is of any use. They scorn your ambition. You must love them, and show your love in these two following ways.

I. First, by a true desire to be taught by them, and to enter into their thoughts. To enter into theirs, observe; not to find your own expressed by them. 'If the person who wrote the book is not wiser than you, you need not read it; if he be, he will think differently from you in many respects.

Very ready we are to say of a book, "How good this is—that's exactly what I think!" But the right feeling is, "How strange that is! I never thought of that before, and yet I see it is true; or if I do not now, I hope I shall, some day." But whether thus submissively or not, at least be sure that you go to the author to get at *his* meaning, not to find yours. Judge it afterwards, if you think yourself qualified to do so; but ascertain it first. And be sure also, if the author is worth anything, that you will not get at his meaning all at once;—nay, that at his whole meaning you will not for a long time arrive in any wise. Not that he does not say what he means, and in strong words too: but he cannot say it all; and what is more strange, will not, but in a hidden way and in parables, in order that he may be sure you want it. I cannot quite see the reason of this, nor analyze that cruel reticence in the breasts of wise men which makes them always hide their deeper thought. They do not give it to you by way of help, but of reward, and will make themselves sure that you deserve it before they allow you to reach it. But it is the same with the physical type of wisdom, gold. There seems, to you and me, no reason why the electric forces of the earth should not carry whatever there is of gold within it at once

to the mountain tops, so that kings and people might know that all the gold they could get was there; and without any trouble of digging, or anxiety, or chance, or waste of time, cut it away, and coin as much as they needed. But Nature does not manage it so. She puts it in little fissures in the earth, nobody knows where: you may dig long and find none; you must dig painfully to find any.

And it is just the same with men's best wisdom. When you come to a good book, you must ask yourself, "Am I inclined to work as an Australian miner would? Are my pickaxes and shovels in good order, and am I in good trim myself, my sleeves well up to the elbow, and my breath good, and my temper?" And, keeping the figure a little longer, even at cost of tiresomeness, for it is a thoroughly useful one, the metal you are in search of being the author's mind or meaning, his words are as the rock which you have to crush and smelt in order to get at it. And your pickaxes are your own care, wit, and learning; your smelting-furnace is your own thoughtful soul. Do not hope to get at any good author's meaning without those tools and that fire; often you will need sharpest, finest chiselling, and patientest fusing, before you can gather one grain of the metal.

And, therefore, first of all, I tell you, earnestly and authoritatively, (*I know* I am right in this,) you must get into the habit of looking intensely at words, and assuring yourself of their meaning, syllable by syllable — nay, letter by letter. For though it is only by reason of the opposition of letters in the function of signs, to sounds in function of signs, that the study of books is called "literature," and that a man versed in it is called, by the consent of nations, a man of letters instead of a man of books, or of

words, you may yet connect with that accidental nomenclature¹ this real principle ; — that you might read all the books in the British Museum (if you could live long enough), and remain an utterly “illiterate,” uneducated person ; but that if you read ten pages of a good book, letter by letter, — that is to say, with real accuracy, — you are for evermore in some measure an educated person. The entire difference between education and non-education (as regards the merely intellectual part of it), consists in this accuracy. A well-educated gentleman may not know many languages, — may not be able to speak any but his own, — may have read very few books. But whatever language he knows, he knows precisely ; whatever word he pronounces, he pronounces rightly ; above all, he is learned in the *peerage* of words ; knows the words of true descent and ancient blood at a glance, from words of modern canaille² ; remembers all their ancestry — their intermarriages, distantest relationships, and the extent to which they were admitted, and offices they held, among the national noblesse³ of words at any time, and in any country. But an uneducated person may know by memory any number of languages, and talk them all, and yet truly know not a word of any, — not a word even of his own. An ordinarily clever⁴ and sensible seaman will be able to make his way ashore at most ports ; yet he has only to speak a sentence of any language to be known for an illiterate person : so also the accent, or turn of expression of a single sentence will at once mark a scholar. And this is so strongly felt, so conclusively admitted by educated persons, that a false accent or a mistaken syllable is

¹ **Nomenclature** : system of names.

² **Canaille** : the rabble.

³ **Noblesse** : nobility.

⁴ **Clever** : capable, skilful.

enough, in the parliament of any civilized nation, to assign to a man a certain degree of inferior standing for ever. And this is right; but it is a pity that the accuracy insisted on is not greater, and required to a serious purpose. It is right that a false Latin quantity should excite a smile in the House of Commons; but it is wrong that a false English meaning should *not* excite a frown there. Let the accent of words be watched, by all means, but let their meaning be watched more closely still, and fewer will do the work. A few words well chosen and well distinguished, will do work that a thousand cannot, when every one is acting, equivocally, in the function of another. Yes; and words, if they are not watched, will do deadly work sometimes. There are masked words droning and skulking about us in Europe just now, — (there never were so many, owing to the spread of a shallow, blotching, blundering, infectious “information,” or rather deformation, everywhere, and to the teaching of catechisms and phrases at schools instead of human meanings) — there are masked words abroad, I say, which nobody understands, but which everybody uses, and most people will also fight for, live for, or even die for, fancying they mean this, or that, or the other, of things dear to them: for such words wear *chamæleon*¹ cloaks — “groundlion” cloaks, of the color of the ground of any man’s fancy: on that ground they lie in wait, and rend him with a spring from it. There were never creatures of prey so mischievous, never diplomatists so cunning, never poisoners so deadly, as these masked words; they are the unjust stewards of all men’s ideas: whatever fancy or favorite instinct a man most cherishes,

¹ *Chamæleon* (ground-lion): a kind of lizard which has the power of changing its color so as to harmonize with that of its surroundings.

he gives to his favorite masked word to take care of for him; the word at last comes to have an infinite power over him, — you cannot get at him but by its ministry. And in languages so mongrel in breed as the English, there is a fatal power of equivocation put into men's hands, almost whether they will or no, in being able to use Greek or Latin forms for a word when they want it to be respectable, and Saxon or otherwise common forms when they want to discredit it. What a singular and salutary effect, for instance, would be produced on the minds of people who are in the habit of taking the Form of the words they live by, for the Power of which those words tell them, if we always either retained, or refused, the Greek form "biblos," or "biblion," as the right expression for "book" — instead of employing it only in the one instance in which we wish to give dignity to the idea, and translating it everywhere else. How wholesome it would be for the many simple persons who worship the Letter of God's Word instead of its Spirit, (just as other idolaters worship His picture instead of His presence,) if, in such places, for instance, as Acts xix. 19 we retained the Greek expression, instead of translating it, and they had to read — "Many of them also which used curious arts, brought their Bibles together, and burnt them before all men; and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver!" Or if, on the other hand, we translated instead of retaining it, and always spoke of "The Holy Book," instead of "Holy Bible," it might come into more heads than it does at present that the Word of God, by which the heavens were, of old, and by which they are now kept in store,*¹ cannot be made a present of to anybody in

* 2 Peter iii. 5-7.

¹ In store: here, preserved.

morocco binding ; nor sown on any wayside by help either of steam plough or steam press ; but is nevertheless being offered to us daily, and by us with contumely¹ refused ; and sown in us daily, and by us as instantly as may be, choked.

And divisions in the mind of Europe, which have cost seas of blood, and in the defence of which the noblest souls of men have been cast away in frantic desolation, countless as forest leaves — though, in the heart of them, founded on deeper causes — have nevertheless been rendered practically possible, namely, by the European adoption of the Greek word² for a public meeting, to give peculiar respectability to such meetings, when held for religious purposes ; and other collateral equivocations, such as the vulgar English one of using the word “priest” as a contraction for “presbyter.”³

Now, in order to deal with words rightly, this is the habit you must form. Nearly every word in your language has been first a word of some other language — of Saxon, German, French, Latin, or Greek (not to speak of eastern and primitive dialects).⁴ And many words have been all these ; — that is to say, have been Greek first, Latin next, French or German next, and English last : undergoing a certain change of sense and use on the lips of each nation ; but retaining a deep vital meaning which all good scholars feel in employing them, even at this day. If you do not know the Greek alphabet, learn it ; young or old — girl or boy — whoever you may be, if you think of reading seriously

¹ **Contumely** : haughty contempt.

² **Greek word** : synod would seem to be the word alluded to here.

³ **Presbyter** : 1. An elder ; one who had authority in the early Christian church. 2. A priest, parson, or pastor.

⁴ **Dialects** : forms of speech.

(which, of course, implies that you have some leisure at command), learn your Greek alphabet; then get good dictionaries of all these languages, and whenever you are in doubt about a word, hunt it down patiently. Read Max Müller's¹ lectures thoroughly, to begin with; and, after that, never let a word escape you that looks suspicious. It is severe work; but you will find it, even at first, interesting, and at last, endlessly amusing. And the general gain to your character, in power and precision, will be quite incalculable.

Mind, this does not imply knowing, or trying to know, Greek, or Latin, or French. It takes a whole life to learn any language perfectly. But you can easily ascertain the meanings through which the English word has passed; and those which in a good writer's work it must still bear.)

And now, merely for example's sake, I will, with your permission, read a few lines of a true book with you, carefully; and see what will come out of them. I will take a book perfectly known to you all. No English words are more familiar to us, yet nothing perhaps has been less read with sincerity. I will take these few following lines of Lycidas:—

“ Last came, and last did go,
The pilot of the Galilean lake;
Two massy keys he bore of metals twain,
(The golden opes, the iron shuts amain),²
He shook his mitred³ locks, and stern bespake,
How well could I have spar'd for thee, young swain,
Enow⁴ of such as for their bellies' sake

¹ Müller (pronounced almost like miller): a distinguished German scholar, formerly professor of modern languages at Oxford.

² Amain: firmly, forcibly.

³ Mitred: wearing a mitre, or bishop's tall, pointed cap.

⁴ Enow: enough.

Creep and intrude, and climb into the fold!
 Of other care they little reckoning make,
 Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast,
 And shove away the worthy bidden guest;
 Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold
 A sheep-hook, or have learn'd aught else, the least
 That to the faithful herdsman's art belongs!
 What recks it them?¹ What need they? They are sped;²
 And when they list,³ their lean and flashy⁴ songs
 Grate on their scrannel⁵ pipes⁶ of wretched straw;
 The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
 But, swoln with wind, and the rank mist they draw,
 Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread;
 Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw
 Daily devours apace, and nothing said."

Let us think over this passage, and examine its words.

First, is it not singular to find Milton assigning to St. Peter, not only his full episcopal⁷ function, but the very types of it which Protestants usually refuse most passionately? His "mitred" locks! Milton was no Bishop-lover; how comes St. Peter to be "mitred"? "Two massy keys he bore." Is this, then, the power of the keys claimed by the Bishops of Rome, and is it acknowledged here by Milton only in a poetical license, for the sake of its picturesqueness, that he may get the gleam of the golden keys to help his effect? Do not think it. Great men do not play stage tricks with doctrines of life and death: only little men do

¹ **What recks it them?**: What care they?

² **Sped**: provided for.

³ **List**: choose.

⁴ **Flashy**: here, spiritless, dull.

⁵ **Scrannel**: poor, miserable.

⁶ **Pipe**: a kind of flute or fife.

⁷ **Episcopal**: relating to the office of a bishop or to church government by bishops.

that. Milton means what he says; and means it with his might too—is going to put the whole strength of his spirit presently into the saying of it. For though not a lover of false bishops, he *was* a lover of true ones; and the Lake-pilot is here, in his thoughts, the type and head of true episcopal power. For Milton reads that text, “I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven,”¹ quite honestly. Puritan though he be, he would not blot it out of the book because there have been bad bishops; nay, in order to understand him, we must understand that verse first; it will not do to eye it askance, or whisper it under our breath, as if it were a weapon of an adverse sect. It is a solemn, universal assertion, deeply to be kept in mind by all sects. But perhaps we shall be better able to reason on it if we go on a little farther, and come back to it. For clearly, this marked insistence on the power of the true episcopate is to make us feel more weightily what is to be charged against the false claimants of episcopate; or generally, against false claimants of power and rank in the body of the clergy; they who, “for their bellies’ sake, creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold.”

Do not think Milton uses those three words to fill up his verse, as a loose writer would. He needs all the three; specially those three, and no more than those—“creep,” and “intrude,” and “climb”; no other words would or could serve the turn, and no more could be added. For they exhaustively comprehend the three classes, correspondent to the three characters, of men who dishonestly seek ecclesiastical power. First, those who “*creep*” into the fold; who do not care for office, nor name, but for secret influence, and do all things occultly and cunningly,

¹ Matthew xvi. 19.

consenting to any servility of office or conduct, so only that they may intimately discern, and unawares direct, the minds of men. Then those who "intrude" (thrust, that is) themselves into the fold, who by natural insolence of heart, and stout eloquence of tongue, and fearlessly perseverant self-assertion, obtain hearing and authority with the common crowd. Lastly, those who "climb," who by labor and learning, both stout and sound, but selfishly exerted in the cause of their own ambition, gain high dignities and authorities, and become "lords over the heritage," though not "ensamples¹ to the flock."

Now go on:—

"Of other care they little reckoning make,
Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast.
Blind mouths—"

I pause again, for this is a strange expression; a broken metaphor, one might think, careless and unscholarly.

Not so: its very audacity and pithiness are intended to make us look close at the phrase and remember it. Those two monosyllables express the precisely accurate contraries of right character, in the two great offices of the Church—those of bishop and pastor.

A Bishop means a person who sees.²

A Pastor means one who feeds.

The most unbishoply character a man can have is, therefore, to be Blind.

The most unpastoral is, instead of feeding, to want to be fed,—to be a Mouth.

Take the two reverses together, and you have "blind mouths." We may advisably follow out this idea a little. Nearly all the evils in the Church have arisen from bishops

¹ *Ensamples*: examples (1 Peter v. 3). ² *Bishop*: literally, an *overseer*.

desiring *power* more than *light*. They want authority, not outlook. Whereas their real office is not to rule; though it may be vigorously to exhort and rebuke; it is the king's office to rule; the bishop's office is to *oversee* the flock; to number it, sheep by sheep; to be ready always to give full account of it. Now it is clear he cannot give account of the souls, if he has not so much as numbered the bodies of his flock. The first thing, therefore, that a bishop has to do is at least to put himself in a position in which, at any moment, he can obtain the history from childhood of every living soul in his diocese, and of its present state. Down in that back street, Bill and Nancy, knocking each other's teeth out! Does the bishop know all about it? Has he his eye upon them? Has he *had* his eye upon them? Can he circumstantially explain to us how Bill got into the habit of beating Nancy about the head? If he cannot, he is no bishop, though he had a mitre as high as Salisbury steeple;¹ he is no bishop, — he has sought to be at the helm instead of the masthead; he has no sight of things. "Nay," you say, "it is not his duty to look after Bill in the back street." What! the fat sheep that have full fleeces—you think it is only those he should look after, while (go back to your Milton) "the hungry sheep look up, and are not fed, besides what the grim wolf, with privy paw" (bishops knowing nothing about it) "daily devours apace, and nothing said"?

"But that's not our idea of a bishop." Perhaps not; but it was St. Paul's; and it was Milton's. They may be right, or we may be; but we must not think we are reading either one or the other by putting our meaning into their words.

¹ **Salisbury steeple**: the highest spire in England.

I go on.

"But, swollen with wind, and the rank mist they draw."

This is to meet the vulgar answer that "if the poor are not looked after in their bodies, they are in their souls; they have spiritual food."

And Milton says, "They have no such thing as spiritual food; they are only swollen with wind." At first you may think that is a coarse type, and an obscure one. But again, it is a quite literally accurate one. Take up your Latin and Greek dictionaries, and find out the meaning of "Spirit." It is only a contraction of the Latin word "breath," and an indistinct translation of the Greek word for "wind." The same word is used in writing, "The wind bloweth where it listeth¹"; and in writing, "So is every one that is born of the Spirit";² born of the *breath*, that is; for it means the breath of God in soul and body. We have the true sense of it in our words "inspiration" and "expire." Now, there are two kinds of breath with which the flock may be filled; God's breath, and man's. The breath of God is health, and life, and peace to them, as the air of heaven is to the flocks on the hills; but man's breath—the word which *he* calls spiritual,—is disease and contagion to them, as the fog of the fen. They rot inwardly with it; they are puffed up by it, as a dead body by the vapors of its own decomposition. This is literally true of all false religious teaching; the first and last, and fatalest sign of it is that "puffing up." Your converted children, who teach their parents; your converted convicts, who teach honest men; your converted dunces, who, having

¹ Listeth: chooseth.

² John iii. 8.

lived in cretinous¹ stupefaction half their lives, suddenly awakening to the fact of there being a God, fancy themselves therefore His peculiar people and messengers; your sectarians of every species, small and great, Catholic or Protestant, of high church or low, in so far as they think themselves exclusively in the right and others wrong; and pre-eminently, in every sect, those who hold that men can be saved by thinking rightly instead of doing rightly, by word instead of act, and wish instead of work, — these are the true fog children — clouds, these, without water; bodies, these, of putrescent vapor and skin, without blood or flesh: blown bag-pipes for the fiends to pipe with — corrupt and corrupting, — “Swollen with wind, and the rank mist they draw.”

Lastly, let us return to the lines respecting the power of the keys, for now we can understand them. Note the difference between Milton and Dante in their interpretation of this power: for once, the latter is weaker in thought; he supposes *both* the keys to be of the gate of heaven; one is of gold, the other of silver: they are given by St. Peter to the sentinel angel; and it is not easy to determine the meaning either of the substances of the three steps of the gate, or of the two keys. But Milton makes one, of gold, the key of heaven; the other, of iron, the key of the prison, in which the wicked teachers are to be bound who “have taken away the key of knowledge, yet entered not in themselves.”²

We have seen that the duties of bishop and pastor are to see, and feed; and, of all who do so, it is said, “He

¹ **Cretinous**: pertaining to a *cretin*, a name for a deformed and helpless idiot, common in the valleys of Switzerland.

² Luke xi. 52.

that watereth, shall be watered also himself.”¹ But the reverse is truth also. He that watereth not, shall be *withered* himself, and he that seeth not, shall himself be shut out of sight, — shut into the perpetual prison-house. And that prison opens here, as well as hereafter : he who is to be bound in heaven must first be bound on earth. That command to the strong angels, of which the rock-apostle² is the image, “Take him, and bind him hand and foot, and cast him out,”³ issues, in its measure, against the teacher, for every help withheld, and for every truth refused, and for every falsehood enforced ; so that he is more strictly fettered the more he fetters, and farther out-cast, as he more and more misleads, till at last the bars of the iron cage close upon him, and as “the golden opes, the iron shuts amain.”

We have got something out of the lines, I think, and much more is yet to be found in them ; but we have done enough by way of example of the kind of word-by-word examination of your author which is rightly called “reading” ; watching every accent and expression, and putting ourselves always in the author’s place, annihilating our own personality, and seeking to enter into his, so as to be able assuredly to say, “Thus Milton thought,” not “Thus I thought, in misreading Milton.” And by this process you will gradually come to attach less weight to your own “Thus I thought” at other times. You will begin to perceive that what *you* thought was a matter of no serious importance ; that your thoughts on any subject are not perhaps the clearest and wisest that could be arrived at

¹ Proverbs xi. 25.

² Rock-apostle : Peter ; literally, a rock. See Matthew xvi. 18.

³ Matthew xxii. 13.

thereupon : in fact, that unless you are a very singular person, you cannot be said to have any "thoughts" at all ; that you have no material for them, in any serious matters ; no right to "think," but only to try to learn more of the facts. Nay, most probably all your life (unless, as I said, you are a singular person) you will have no legitimate right to an "opinion" on any business, except that instantly under your hand. What must of necessity be done, you can always find out, beyond question, how to do. Have you a house to keep in order, a commodity to sell, a field to plough, a ditch to cleanse ? There need be no two opinions about these proceedings ; it is at your peril if you have not much more than an "opinion" on the way to manage such matters. And also, outside of your own business, there are one or two subjects on which you are bound to have but one opinion. That roguery and lying are objectionable, and are instantly to be flogged out of the way whenever discovered ; that covetousness and love of quarrelling are dangerous dispositions even in children, and deadly dispositions in men and nations ;—that in the end, the God of heaven and earth loves active, modest, and kind people, and hates idle, proud, greedy, and cruel ones ;—on these general facts you are bound to have but one, and that a very strong, opinion. For the rest, respecting religions, governments, sciences, arts, you will find that, on the whole, you can know NOTHING,—judge nothing ; that the best you can do, even though you may be a well-educated person, is to be silent, and strive to be wiser every day, and to understand a little more of the thoughts of others, which so soon as you try to do honestly, you will discover that the thoughts even of the wisest are

very little more than pertinent questions.¹ To put the difficulty into a clear shape, and exhibit to you the grounds for *indecision*, that is all they can generally do for you! — and well for them and for us, if indeed they are able “to mix the music with our thoughts, and sadden us with heavenly doubts.” This writer, from whom I have been reading to you, is not among the first or wisest: “he sees shrewdly as far as he sees, and therefore it is easy to find out his full meaning; but with the greater men, you cannot fathom their meaning; they do not even wholly measure it themselves, — it is so wide. Suppose I had asked you, for instance, to seek for Shakespeare’s opinion, instead of Milton’s, on this matter of Church authority? or for Dante’s? Have any of you, at this instant, the least idea what either thought about it? Have you ever balanced the scene with the bishops in Richard III. against the character of Cranmer? the description of St. Francis and St. Dominic against that of him who made Virgil wonder to gaze upon him,² — “disteso, tanto vilmente, nell’ eterno esilio”; or of him³ whom Dante stood beside, “come ’l frate che confessa lo perfido assassin?” Shakespeare and Alighieri⁴ knew men better than most of us, I presume! They were both in the midst of the main struggle between the temporal and spiritual powers. They had an opinion, we may guess. But where is it? Bring it into court! Put Shakespeare’s or Dante’s creed into articles, and send *that* up into the Ecclesiastical Courts!

¹ **Pertinent**: appropriate, or to the point.

² **Him**: Caiaphas (see John xi. 50) “distended (on the cross) so ignominiously in the eternal exile.” — *Dante’s Inferno*, xxiii. 126.

³ **Him**: Nicholas III. (“I stood”) “like the friar who is confessing a treacherous assassin.” — *Inferno*, xix. 49. •

⁴ **Alighieri**: Dante Alighieri (Dan’ta A-le-ge-ā’ree).

You will not be able, I tell you again, for many and many a day, to come at the real purposes and teaching of these great men ; but a very little honest study of them will enable you to perceive that what you took for your own "judgment" was mere chance prejudice, and drifted, helpless, entangled weed of castaway thought : nay, you will see that most men's minds are indeed little better than rough heath wilderness, neglected and stubborn, partly barren, partly overgrown with pestilent brakes and venomous wind-sown herbage of evil surmise ; that the first thing you have to do for them, and yourself, is eagerly and scornfully to set fire to *this* ; burn all the jungle into wholesome ash heaps, and then plough and sow. All the true literary work before you, for life, must begin with obedience to that order. "Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns."¹

II. Having then faithfully listened to the great teachers, that you may enter into their Thoughts, you have yet this higher advance to make ;—you have to enter into their Hearts. As you go to them first for clear sight, so you must stay with them that you may share at last their just and mighty Passion. Passion, or "sensation." I am not afraid of the word ; still less of the thing. You have heard many outcries against sensation lately ; but, I can tell you, it is not less sensation we want, but more. The ennobling difference between one man and another,—between one animal and another,—is precisely this, that one feels more than another. If we were sponges, perhaps sensation might not be easily got for us ; if we were earth-worms, liable at every instant to be cut in two by the spade, per-

¹ Jeremiah iv. 3.

haps too much sensation might not be good for us. But, being human creatures, *it is* good for us ; nay, we are only human in so far as we are sensitive, and our honor is precisely in proportion to our passion.

You know I said of that great and pure society of the dead, that it would allow "no vain or vulgar person to enter there." What do you think I meant by a "vulgar" person? What do you yourselves mean by "vulgarity"? You will find it a fruitful subject of thought ; but, briefly, the essence of all vulgarity lies in want of sensation. Simple and innocent vulgarity is merely an untrained and undeveloped bluntness of body and mind ; but in true inbred vulgarity, there is a deathful callousness, which, in extremity, becomes capable of every sort of bestial habit and crime, without fear, without pleasure, without horror, and without pity. It is in the blunt hand and the dead heart, in the diseased habit, in the hardened conscience, that men become vulgar ; they are for ever vulgar, precisely in proportion as they are incapable of sympathy, — of quick understanding, — of all that, in deep insistence on the common, but most accurate term, may be called the "tact" or touch-faculty of body and soul ; that tact which the *Mimosa* has in trees, which the pure woman has above all creatures ; — fineness and fulness of sensation, beyond reason ; — the guide and sanctifier of reason itself. Reason can but determine what is true : — it is the God-given passion of humanity which alone can recognize what God has made good.

We come then to the great concourse of the Dead, not merely to know from them what is True, but chiefly to feel with them what is Righteous. Now, to feel with them, we must be like them ; and none of us can become that with-

out pains. As the true knowledge is disciplined and tested knowledge,—not the first thought that comes,—so the true passion is disciplined and tested passion—not the first passion that comes. The first that come are the vain, the false, the treacherous ; if you yield to them they will lead you wildly and far, in vain pursuit, in hollow enthusiasm, till you have no true purpose and no true passion left. Not that any feeling possible to humanity is in itself wrong, but only wrong when undisciplined. Its nobility is in its force and justice ; it is wrong when it is weak, and felt for paltry cause. There is a mean wonder as of a child who sees a juggler tossing golden balls, and this is base, if you will. But do you think that the wonder is ignoble, or the sensation less, with which every human soul is called to watch the golden balls of heaven tossed through the night by the Hand that made them ? There is a mean curiosity, as of a child opening a forbidden door, or a servant prying into her master's business ;—and a noble curiosity, questioning, in the front of danger, the source of the great river beyond the sand—the place of the great continents beyond the sea ;—a nobler curiosity still, which questions of the source of the River of Life, and of the space of the Continent of Heaven,—things which “the angels desire to look into.” So the anxiety is ignoble, with which you linger over the course and catastrophe of an idle tale ; but do you think the anxiety is less, or greater, with which you watch, or *ought* to watch, the dealings of fate and destiny with the life of an agonized nation ? Alas ! it is the narrowness, selfishness, minuteness, of your sensation that you have to deplore in England at this day ;—sensation which spends itself in bouquets and speeches ; in revellings and junketings ; in sham fights and gay puppet shows, while

you can look on and see noble nations murdered, man by man, woman by woman, child by child, without an effort, or a tear.

I said "minuteness" and "selfishness" of sensation, but in a word, I ought to have said "injustice" or "unrighteousness" of sensation. For as in nothing is a gentleman better to be discerned from a vulgar person, so in nothing is a gentle nation (such nations have been) better to be discerned from a mob, than in this, — that their feelings are constant and just, results of due contemplation, and of equal thought. You can talk a mob into anything ; its feelings may be — usually are — on the whole generous and right ; but it has no foundation for them, no hold of them ; you may tease or tickle it into any, at your pleasure ; it thinks by infection, for the most part, catching a passion like a cold, and there is nothing so little that it will not roar itself wild about, when the fit is on : — nothing so great but it will forget in an hour, when the fit is past. But a gentleman's or a gentle nation's, passions are just, measured, and continuous. A great nation, for instance, does not spend its entire wits for a couple of months in weighing evidence of a single ruffian's having done a single murder ; and for a couple of years, see its own children murder each other by their thousands or tens of thousands a day, considering only what the effect is likely to be on the price of cotton, and caring nowise to determine which side of battle is in the wrong. Neither does a great nation send its poor little boys to jail for stealing six walnuts, and allow its bankrupts to steal their hundreds or thousands with a bow, and its bankers, rich with poor men's savings, to close their doors "under circumstances over which they have no con-

trol," with a "by your leave"; and large landed estates to be bought by men who have made their money by going with armed steamers up and down the China Seas, selling opium at the cannon's mouth, and altering, for the benefit of the foreign nation, the common highwayman's demand of "your money *or* your life," into that of "your money *and* your life."

My friends, I do not know why any of us should talk about reading. We want some sharper discipline than that of reading; but, at all events, be assured, we cannot read. No reading is possible for a people with its mind in this state. No sentence of any great writer is intelligible to them. It is simply and sternly impossible for the English public, at this moment, to understand any thoughtful writing,—so incapable of thought has it become in its insanity of avarice. Happily, our disease is, as yet, little worse than this incapacity of thought; it is not corruption of the inner nature; we ring true still, when anything strikes home to us; and though the idea that everything should "pay" has infected our every purpose so deeply, that even when we would play the good Samaritan, we never take out our twopence and give them to the host, without saying, "When I come again, thou shalt give me fourpence," there is a capacity of noble passion left in our hearts' core. We show it in our work—in our war,—even in those unjust domestic affections which make us furious at a small private wrong, while we are polite to a boundless public one: we are still industrious to the last hour of the day, though we add the gambler's fury to the laborer's patience; we are still brave to the death, though incapable of discerning true cause for battle, and are still true in affection to our own flesh, to the death, as the sea-

monsters are, and the rock-eagles. And there is hope for a nation while this can be still said of it. As long as it holds its life in its hand, ready to give it for its honor (though a foolish honor), for its love (though a selfish love), and for its business (though a base business), there is hope for it. But hope only; for this instinctive, reckless virtue cannot last. No nation can last, which has made a mob of itself, however generous at heart. It must discipline its passions, and direct them, or they will discipline it, one day, with scorpion whips.¹ Above all, a nation cannot last as a money-making mob: it cannot with impunity, — it cannot with existence, — go on despising literature, despising science, despising art, despising nature, despising compassion, and concentrating its soul on Pence. Do you think these are harsh or wild words? Have patience with me but a little longer. I will prove their truth to you, clause by clause.

I. I say first we have despised literature. What do we, as a nation, care about books? How much do you think we spend altogether on our libraries, public or private, as compared with what we spend on our horses? If a man spends lavishly on his library, you call him mad — a bibliomaniac. But you never call any one a horse-maniac, though men ruin themselves every day by their horses, and you do not hear of people ruining themselves by their books. Or, to go lower still, how much do you think the contents of the book-shelves of the United Kingdom, public and private, would fetch, as compared with the contents of its wine-cellars? What position would its expenditure on literature take, as compared with its expenditure on

¹ **Scorpion whips**: whips shaped like the tail of a scorpion, and armed with iron points — any terrible punishment.

luxurious eating? We talk of food for the mind, as of food for the body: now a good book contains such food inexhaustibly; it is a provision for life, and for the best part of us; yet how long most people would look at the best book before they would give the price of a large turbot for it! Though there have been men who have pinched their stomachs and bared their backs to buy a book, whose libraries were cheaper to them, I think, in the end, than most men's dinners are. We are few of us put to such trial, and more the pity; for, indeed, a precious thing is all the more precious to us if it has been won by work or economy; and if public libraries were half as costly as public dinners, or books cost the tenth part of what bracelets do, even foolish men and women might sometimes suspect there was good in reading, as well as in munching and sparkling; whereas the very cheapness of literature is making even wise people forget that if a book is worth reading, it is worth buying. No book is worth anything which is not worth *much*; nor is it serviceable, until it has been read, and reread, and loved, and loved again; and marked, so that you can refer to the passages you want in it, as a soldier can seize the weapon he needs in an armory, or a housewife bring the spice she needs from her store. Bread of flour is good: but there is bread, sweet as honey, if we would eat it, in a good book; and the family must be poor indeed which, once in their lives cannot, for such multipliable barley-loaves, pay their baker's bill. We call ourselves a rich nation, and we are filthy and foolish enough to thumb each other's books out of circulating libraries!

II. I say we have despised science. "What!" (you exclaim) "are we not foremost in all discovery, and is not

the whole world giddy by reason, or unreason, of our inventions?" Yes; but do you suppose that is national work? That work is all done in spite of the nation; by private people's zeal and money. We are glad enough, indeed, to make our profit of science; we snap up anything in the way of a scientific bone that has meat on it, eagerly enough; but if the scientific man comes for a bone or a crust to *us*, that is another story. What have we publicly done for science? We are obliged to know what o'clock it is, for the safety of our ships, and therefore we pay for an observatory¹; and we allow ourselves, in the person of our Parliament, to be annually tormented into doing something, in a slovenly way, for the British Museum; sullenly apprehending that to be a place for keeping stuffed birds in, to amuse our children. If anybody will pay for his own telescope, and resolve another nebula,² we cackle over the discernment as if it were our own; if one in ten thousand of our hunting squires³ suddenly perceives that the earth was indeed made to be something else than a portion for foxes, and burrows in it himself, and tells us where the gold is, and where the coals, we understand that there is some use in that; and very properly knight⁴ him; but is the accident of his having found out how to employ himself usefully any credit to *us*? (The negation of such discovery among his brother squires may

¹ **Observatory**: one chief use of an observatory, such as the English national observatory at Greenwich, is to furnish absolutely correct or astronomical time, in order that the masters of ships may be able to calculate their position and course at sea.

² **Resolve another nebula**: powerful telescopes show that the nebulae or cloud-like patches of light seen at night in certain parts of the heaven — e.g. the Milky Way — can be resolved into thousands of distinct stars.

³ **Squires**: country gentlemen.

⁴ **Knight**: to give the title of baronet or sir, as Sir James Clark.

perhaps be some *discredit* to us, if we would consider of it.) But if you doubt these generalities, here is one fact for us all to meditate upon, illustrative of our love of science. Two years ago there was a collection of the fossils of Solenhofen to be sold in Bavaria: the best in existence, containing many specimens unique for perfectness, and one, unique as an example of a species (a whole kingdom of unknown living creatures being announced by that fossil). This collection, of which the mere market worth, among private buyers, would probably have been some thousand or twelve hundred pounds,¹ was offered to the English nation for seven hundred: but we would not give seven hundred, and the whole series would have been in the Munich² Museum at this moment, if Professor Owen * had not, with loss of his own time, and patient tormenting of the British public in person of its representatives, got leave to give four hundred pounds at once, and himself become answerable for the other three! which the said public will doubtless pay him eventually, but sulkily, and caring nothing about the matter all the while; only always ready to cackle if any credit comes of it. Consider, I beg of you, arithmetically, what this fact means. Your annual expenditure for public purposes (a third of it for military apparatus) is at least fifty millions. Now 700*l.* is to 50,000,000*l.* roughly, as seven pence to two thousand pounds. Suppose, then, a gentleman of unknown income, but whose wealth was to be conjectured from the

¹ Pound: \$5.00.

² Munich (Mu'nik).

* I state this fact without Professor Owen's permission; which of course he could not with propriety have granted, had I asked it; but I consider it so important that the public should be aware of the fact, that I do what seems to me right, though rude.

fact that he spent two thousand a year on his park-walls and footmen only, professes himself fond of science; and that one of his servants comes eagerly to tell him that an unique collection of fossils, giving clue to a new era of creation, is to be had for the sum of seven pence sterling; and that the gentleman, who is fond of science, and spends two thousand a year on his park, answers, after keeping his servant waiting several months, "Well! I'll give you four pence for them, if you will be answerable for the extra three pence yourself, till next year!"

III. I say you have despised Art! "What!" you again answer, "have we not Art exhibitions, miles long? and do we not pay thousands of pounds for single pictures? and have we not Art schools and institutions, more than ever nation had before?" Yes, truly, but all that is for the sake of the shop. You would fain sell canvas as well as coals, and crockery as well as iron; you would take every other nation's bread out of its mouth if you could; * not being able to do that, your ideal of life is to stand in the thoroughfares of the world, like Ludgate apprentices screaming to every passer-by, "What d'ye lack?"¹ You know nothing of your own faculties or circumstances; you fancy that, among your damp, flat fields of clay, you can have as quick art-fancy as the Frenchman among his bronzed vines, or the Italian under his volcanic cliffs;—that Art may be learned as book-keeping is, and when learned will give you more books to keep. You care for

* That was our real idea of "Free Trade"—"All the trade to myself." You find now that by "competition" other people can manage to sell something as well as you—and now we call for Protection again. Wretches!

¹ "What d'ye lack?" This was once the common street cry of the London (Ludgate Hill District) apprentices when soliciting customers for their masters' wares. See Scott's "Fortunes of Nigel."

pictures, absolutely, no more than you do for the bills pasted on your dead walls. There is always room on the walls for the bills to be read, — never for the pictures to be seen. You do not know what pictures you have (by repute) in the country, nor whether they are false or true, nor whether they are taken care of or not; in foreign countries, you calmly see the noblest existing pictures in the world rotting in abandoned wreck — (and, in Venice, with the Austrian guns deliberately pointed at the palaces containing them), and if you heard that all the Titians¹ in Europe were made sand-bags to-morrow on the Austrian forts, it would not trouble you so much as the chance of a brace or two of game less in your own bags in a day's shooting. That is your national love of Art.

IV. You have despised nature; that is to say, all the deep and sacred sensations of natural scenery. The French revolutionists made stables of the cathedrals of France; you have made racecourses of the cathedrals of the earth. Your *one* conception of pleasure is to drive in railroad carriages round their aisles, and eat off their altars.* You have put a railroad bridge over the fall of Schaffhausen. You have tunnelled the cliffs of Lucerne by Tell's chapel; you have destroyed the Clarens shore of the Lake of Geneva; there is not a quiet valley in England that you have not filled with bellowing fire: there is no particle left of English land which you have not trampled coal ashes into — nor any foreign city in which the spread of your pres-

¹ **Titians**: paintings by Titian, a celebrated Italian artist of the sixteenth century. Sand-bags are used in fortification.

* I meant that the beautiful places in the world — Switzerland, Italy, South Germany, and so on — are, indeed, the truest cathedrals — places to be reverent in, and to worship in; and that we only care to drive through them: and to eat and drink at their most sacred places.

ence is not marked among its fair old streets and happy gardens by a consuming white leprosy of new hotels and perfumers' shops: the Alps themselves, which your own poets used to love so reverently, you look upon as soaped poles in a bear-garden, which you set yourselves to climb, and slide down again, with "shrieks of delight." When you are past shrieking, having no human articulate voice to say you are glad with, you fill the quietude of their valleys with gunpowder blasts, and rush home, red with cutaneous eruption of conceit, and voluble with convulsive hiccough of self-satisfaction. I think nearly the two sorrowfulest spectacles I have ever seen in humanity, taking the deep inner significance of them, are the English mobs in the valley of Chamouni,¹ amusing themselves with firing rusty howitzers²; and the Swiss vintagers of Zurich³ expressing their Christian thanks for the gift of the vine, by assembling in knots in the "towers of the vineyards," and slowly loading and firing horse-pistols from morning till evening. It is pitiful to have dim conceptions of beauty; more pitiful, it seems to me, to have conceptions like these, of mirth.

Mighty of heart, mighty of mind — "magnanimous"⁴ — to be this, is indeed to be great in life; to become this increasingly, is, indeed, to "advance in life," — in life itself — not in the trappings⁵ of it. My friends, do you remember that old Scythian⁶ custom, when the head of a house

¹ Chamouni (Shàmoonee').

² Howitzers: light cannon used for firing shells or bombs.

³ Zurich (Zoo'rik).

⁴ Magnanimous: from *magnus*, great, and *animus*, mind; hence, great or mighty of mind.

⁵ Trappings: adornments.

⁶ Scythian: pertaining to Scythia, a name given in ancient times to the country north and east of the Black Sea, the Caspian, and the Sea of Aral.

died? How he was dressed in his finest dress, and set in his chariot, and carried about to his friends' houses; and each of them placed him at his table's head, and all feasted in his presence? Suppose it were offered to you, in plain words, as it is offered to you in dire facts, that you should gain this Scythian honor, gradually, while you yet thought yourself alive. Suppose the offer were this: "You shall die slowly; your blood shall daily grow cold, your flesh petrify, your heart beat at last only as a rusted group of iron valves. Your life shall fade from you, and sink through the earth into the ice of Caina¹; but, day by day, your body shall be dressed more gaily, and set in higher chariots, and have more orders² on its breast—crowns on its head, if you will. Men shall bow before it, stare and shout round it, crowd after it up and down the streets; build palaces for it, feast with it at their tables' heads all the night long; your soul shall stay enough within it to know what they do, and feel the weight of the golden dress on its shoulders, and the furrow of the crown-edge on the skull;—no more." Would you take the offer, verbally made by the death-angel? Would the meanest among us take it, think you? Yet practically and verily we grasp at it, every one of us, in a measure; many of us grasp at it in its fulness of horror. Every man accepts it, who desires to advance in life without knowing what life is; who means only that he is to get more horses, and more footmen,³ and more fortune, and more public honor, and—*not* more personal soul. He only is advancing in life, whose heart is getting softer, whose blood warmer,

¹ **Caina**: an ice-ribbed region of Dante's hell.

² **Orders**: here, military or other badges of honor.

³ **Footmen**: men-servants in livery.

whose brain quicker, whose spirit is entering into Living * peace. And the men who have this life in them are the true lords or kings of the earth—they, and they only. All other kingships, so far as they are true, are only the practical issue and expression of theirs; if less than this, they are either dramatic royalties,—costly shows, with real jewels instead of tinsel—the toys of nations; or else, they are no royalties at all, but tyrannies, or the mere active and practical issue of national folly; for which reason I have said of them elsewhere, “Visible governments are the toys of some nations, the diseases of others, the harness¹ of some, the burdens of more.”

But I have no words for the wonder with which I hear Kinghood still spoken of, even among thoughtful men, as if governed nations were a personal property, and might be bought and sold, or otherwise acquired, as sheep, of whose flesh their king was to feed, and whose fleece he was to gather; as if Achilles’ indignant epithet of base kings, “people-eating,” were the constant and proper title of all monarchs; and enlargement of a king’s dominion meant the same thing as the increase of a private man’s estate! Kings who think so, however powerful, can no more be the true kings of the nation than gad-flies are the kings of a horse; they suck it, and may drive it wild, but do not guide it. They, and their courts, and their armies are, if one could see clearly, only a large species of marsh mosquito, with bayonet proboscis and melodious, band-mastered, trumpeting in the summer air; the twilight being, perhaps, sometimes fairer, but hardly more whole-

* “το δὲ φρόνημα του πνεύματος ζωὴ καὶ εἰρήνη.”²

¹ Harness: here, armor or defence.

² “To be spiritually minded is life and peace.”—*Romans* vi. 8.

some, for its glittering mists of midge companies. The ~~time~~ kings, meanwhile, rule quietly, if at all, and hate ruling; too many of them make "*il gran refiúto*";¹ and if they do not, the mob, as soon as they are likely to become useful to it, is pretty sure to make *its* "*gran refiúto*" of *them*.

Yet the visible king may also be a true one, some day, if ever day comes when he will estimate his dominion by the *force* of it, — not the geographical boundaries. It matters very little whether Trent cuts you a cantel² out here, or Rhine rounds you a castle less there. But it does matter to you, king of men, whether you can verily say to this man, "Go," and he goeth; and to another, "Come," and he cometh. Whether you can turn your people as you can Trent — and where it is that you bid them come, and where go. It matters to you, king of men, whether your people hate you, and die by you, or love you, and live by you. You may measure your dominion by multitudes better than by miles; and count degrees of love latitude, not from, but to, a wonderfully warm and infinite equator. Measure! nay you cannot measure. Who shall measure the difference between the power of those who "do and teach," and who are greatest in the kingdoms of earth, as of heaven — and the power of those who undo, and consume — whose power, at the fullest, is only the power of the moth and the rust? Strange! to think how the Moth-kings lay up treasures for the moth, and the Rust-kings, who are to their peoples' strength as rust to armor, lay up treasures for the rust; and the Robber-kings, treasures for the robber; but how few kings have ever laid up treasures

¹ *Il gran refiúto*: a grand renunciation.

² *Cantel*: a corner or piece.

that needed no guarding — treasures of which, the more thieves there were, the better! Broidered robe, only to be rent — helm¹ and sword, only to be dimmed; jewel and gold, only to be scattered — there have been three kinds of kings who have gathered these. Suppose there ever should arise a fourth order of kings, who had read, in some obscure writing of long ago, that there was a fourth kind of treasure, which the jewel and gold could not equal, neither should it be valued with pure gold. A web more fair in the weaving, by Athena's² shuttle; an armor, forged in diviner fire by Vulcanian³ force — a gold only to be mined in the sun's red heart, where he sets over the Delphian⁴ cliffs; — deep-pictured tissue,⁵ impenetrable armor, potable⁶ gold! — the three great Angels of Conduct, Toil, and Thought, still calling to us, and waiting at the posts of our doors, to lead us, if we would, with their winged power, and guide us, with their inescapable eyes, by the path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye has not seen.⁷ Suppose kings should ever arise, who heard and believed this word, and at last gathered and brought forth treasures of — Wisdom — for their people?

Think what an amazing business *that* would be! How inconceivable, in the state of our present national wisdom!

¹ **Helm**: here, helmet.

² **Athena**: the Greek goddess of wisdom and of the arts; she is usually called Minerva.

³ **Vulcanian**: referring to Vulcan, the Greek god who presided over fire and the working of metals; the word is also used of volcanic force.

⁴ **Delphian**: relating to Delphi, in Greece.

⁵ **Deep-pictured tissue**: a fabric interwoven with gold and colors, often so as to form figures or pictures.

⁶ **Potable**: drinkable.

⁷ Job xxviii. 7.

That we should bring up our peasants to a book exercise instead of a bayonet exercise!—organize, drill, maintain with pay, and good generalship, armies of thinkers, instead of armies of stabbers!—find national amusement in reading-rooms as well as rifle-grounds; give prizes for a fair shot at a fact, as well as for a leaden splash on a target. What an absurd idea it seems, put fairly in words, that the wealth of the capitalists of civilized nations should ever come to support literature instead of war! Have yet patience with me, while I read you a single sentence out of the only book, properly to be called a book, that I have yet written myself, the one that will stand, (if anything stand,) surest and longest of all work of mine.

“It is one very awful form of the operation of wealth in Europe that it is entirely capitalists’ wealth which supports unjust wars. Just wars do not need so much money to support them; for most of the men who wage such, wage them gratis; but for an unjust war, men’s bodies and souls have both to be bought; and the best tools of war for them besides, which makes such war costly to the maximum¹; not to speak of the cost of base fear, and angry suspicion, between nations which have not grace nor honesty enough in all their multitudes to buy an hour’s peace of mind with; as, at present France and England, purchasing of each other ten millions’ sterling worth of consternation, annually (a remarkably light crop, half thorns and half aspen leaves, sown, reaped, and granaried by the ‘science’ of the modern political economist, teaching covetousness instead of truth). And, all unjust war being supportable, if not by pillage of the

¹ **Maximum** : greatest degree.

enemy, only by loans from capitalists, these loans are repaid by subsequent taxation¹ of the people, who appear to have no will in the matter, the capitalists' will being the primary root of the war; but its real root is the covetousness of the whole nation, rendering it incapable of faith, frankness, or justice, and bringing about, therefore, in due time, his own separate loss and punishment to each person."²

France and England literally, observe, buy *panic* of each other; they pay, each of them, for ten thousand thousand pounds' worth of terror, a year. Now suppose, instead of buying these ten millions' worth of panic annually, they made up their minds to be at peace with each other, and buy ten millions' worth of knowledge annually; and that each nation spent its ten thousand thousand pounds a year in founding royal libraries, royal museums, royal gardens, and places of rest. Might it not be better somewhat for both French and English?

It will be long, yet, before that comes to pass. Nevertheless, I hope it will not be long before royal or national libraries will be founded in every considerable city, with a royal series of books in them; the same series in every one of them, chosen books, the best in every kind, prepared for that national series in the most perfect way possible; their text printed all on leaves of equal size, broad of margin, and divided into pleasant volumes, light in the

¹ **Taxation:** about seventy-five cents out of every dollar of taxes levied in England is spent either in paying the interest of old war debts or in making preparation for future wars. The enormous expense of the great standing armies of Europe, says Professor Atkinson, is draining the very life-blood of the people. Eventually, as he says, the countries of the old world must "*dis-arm or starve*."

² Ruskin's "Unto this Last" (Ad Valorem).

hand, beautiful, and strong, and thorough as examples of binders' work ; and that these great libraries will be accessible to all clean and orderly persons at all times of the day and evening ; strict law being enforced for this cleanliness and quietness.

I could shape for you other plans, for art-galleries, and for natural history galleries, and for many precious, many, it seems to me, needful, things ; but this book plan is the easiest and needfulest, and would prove a considerable tonic to what we call our British constitution, which has fallen dropsical of late, and has an evil thirst, and evil hunger, and wants healthier feeding. You have got its corn laws¹ repealed for it ; try if you cannot get corn laws established for it, dealing in a better bread ;—bread made of that old enchanted Arabian grain, the Sesame,² which opens doors ;—doors, not of robbers', but of Kings' Treasuries.

Friends, the treasuries of true kings are the streets of their cities ; and the gold they gather, which for others is as the mire of the streets, changes itself, for them and their people, into a crystalline pavement for evermore.

¹ **Corn laws** : laws which imposed a heavy duty on all grain ("corn") imported into England, thus keeping up the price of bread, and causing great distress among the laboring classes. These laws were modified between 1846–1849, and finally repealed in 1869.

² **Sesame** : a kind of grain used for food in Eastern countries. In the story of the Forty Thieves in the Arabian Nights, "Sesame" is the magic word which would open or shut the door of the robbers' cave.

BOOKS AND READING.¹

SECOND LECTURE.

IT will, perhaps, be well, as this lecture is the sequel of one previously given, that I should shortly state to you my general intention in both. The questions specially proposed to you in the first, namely, How and What to Read, rose out of a far deeper one, which it was my endeavor to make you propose earnestly to yourselves, namely, *Why* to Read. I want you to feel, with me, that whatever advantages we possess in the present day in the diffusion of education and of literature, can only be rightly used by any of us when we have apprehended clearly what education is to lead to, and literature to teach. I wish you to see that both well-directed moral training and well-chosen reading lead to the possession of a power over the ill-guided and illiterate, which is, according to the measure of it, in the truest sense, *kingly*; conferring indeed the purest kingship that can exist among men: too many other kingships (however distinguished by visible insignia² or material power) being either spectral, or tyrannous;—Spectral—that is to say, aspects and shadows only of royalty, hollow as death, and which only the “Likeness of a kingly crown have on”; or else tyrannous—that is to say, substituting their own will for the law of justice and love by which all true kings rule.

¹ From “Sesame and Lilies” (Lilies—Queens’ Gardens).

² **Insignia**: badges or distinguishing marks of honor and rank.

There is, then, I repeat — and as I want to leave this idea with you, I begin with it, and shall end with it — only one pure kind of kingship ; an inevitable and eternal kind, crowned or not : the kingship, namely, which consists in a stronger moral state, and a truer thoughtful state, than that of others ; enabling you, therefore, to guide, or to raise them. Observe that word “State” ; we have got into a loose way of using it. It means literally the standing and stability of a thing ; and you have the full force of it in the derived word “statue” — “the immovable thing.” A king’s majesty or “state,” then, and the right of his kingdom to be called a state, depends on the movelessness of both : — without tremor, without quiver of balance ; established and enthroned upon a foundation of eternal law which nothing can alter nor overthrow.

Believing that all literature and all education are only useful so far as they tend to confirm this calm, beneficent, and *therefore* kingly, power — first, over ourselves, and, through ourselves, over all around us, I am now going to ask you to consider with me farther, what special portion or kind of this royal authority, arising out of noble education, may rightly be possessed by women ; and how far they also are called to a true queenly power. Not in their households merely, but over all within their sphere. And in what sense, if they rightly understood and exercised this royal or gracious influence, the order and beauty induced by such benignant power would justify us in speaking of the territories over which each of them reigned, as “Queens’ Gardens.”

And here, in the very outset, we are met by a far deeper question, which — strange though this may seem — remains among many of us yet quite undecided, in spite of its infinite importance.

We cannot determine what the queenly power of women should be, until we are agreed what their ordinary power should be. We cannot consider how education may fit them for any widely extending duty, until we are agreed what is their true constant duty. And there never was a time when wilder words were spoken,* or more vain imagination permitted, respecting this question — quite vital to all social happiness. The relations of the womanly to the manly nature, their different capacities of intellect or of virtue, seem never to have been yet measured with entire consent. We hear of the mission and of the rights of Woman, as if these could ever be separate from the mission and the rights of Man; — as if she and her lord were creatures of independent kind and of irreconcilable claim. This, at least, is wrong. And not less wrong — perhaps even more foolishly wrong (for I will anticipate thus far what I hope to prove) — is the idea that woman is only the shadow and attendant image of her lord, owing him a thoughtless and servile obedience, and supported altogether in her weakness by the pre-eminence of his fortitude.

This, I say, is the most foolish of all errors respecting her who was made to be the helpmate of man. As if he could be helped effectively by a shadow, or worthily by a slave!

Let us try, then, whether we cannot get at some clear and harmonious idea (it must be harmonious if it is true) of what womanly mind and virtue are in power and office, with respect to man's; and how their relations, rightly accepted, aid, and increase, the vigor, and honor, and authority of both.

And now I must repeat one thing I said in the last lecture: namely, that the first use of education was to

enable us to consult with the wisest and the greatest men on all points of earnest difficulty. That to use books rightly, was to go to them for help: to appeal to them, when our own knowledge and power of thought failed; to be led by them into wider sight, purer conception than our own, and receive from them the united sentence of the judges and councils of all time, against our solitary and unstable opinion.

Let us do this now. Let us see whether the greatest, the wisest, the purest-hearted of all ages are agreed in any wise on this point: let us hear the testimony they have left respecting what they held to be the true dignity of woman, and her mode of help to man.

And first let us take Shakespeare.

Note broadly in the outset, Shakespeare has no heroes; — he has only heroines. There is not one entirely heroic figure in all his plays, except the slight sketch of Henry the Fifth, exaggerated for the purposes of the stage; and the still slighter Valentine in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. In his labored and perfect plays you have no hero. Othello would have been one, if his simplicity had not been so great as to leave him the prey of every base practice round him; but he is the only example even approximating to the heroic type. Coriolanus — Cæsar — Anthony, stand in flawed strength, and fall by their vanities; — Hamlet is indolent, and drowsily speculative; Romeo an impatient boy; the Merchant of Venice languidly submissive to adverse fortune; Kent, in *King Lear*, is entirely noble at heart, but too rough and unpolished to be of true use at the critical time, and he sinks into the office of a servant only. Orlando, no less noble, is yet the despairing toy of chance, followed, comforted, saved, by

with the list of names

Rosalind. Whereas there is hardly a play that has not a perfect woman in it, steadfast in grave hope, and errorless purpose; Cordelia, Desdemona, Isabella, Hermione, Imogen, Queen Katherine, Perdita, Sylvia, Viola, Rosalind, Helena, and last, and perhaps loveliest, Virginia, are all faultless; conceived in the highest heroic type of humanity.

Then observe secondly,

The catastrophe of every play is caused always by the folly or fault of a man; the redemption, if there be any, is by the wisdom and virtue of a woman, and failing that, there is none. The catastrophe of King Lear is owing to his own want of judgment, his impatient vanity, his misunderstanding of his children; the virtue of his one true daughter would have saved him from all the injuries of the others, unless he had cast her away from him; as it is, she all but saves him.

Of Othello I need not trace the tale; nor the one weakness of his so mighty love; nor the inferiority of his perceptive intellect to that even of the second woman character in the play, the Emilia who dies in wild testimony against his error:—"Oh, murderous coxcomb¹! What should such a fool Do with so good a wife?"

In Romeo and Juliet, the wise and entirely brave stratagem of the wife is brought to ruinous issue by the reckless impatience of her husband. In Winter's Tale, and in Cymbeline, the happiness and existence of two princely households, lost through long years, and imperilled to the death by the folly and obstinacy of the husbands, are redeemed at last by the queenly patience and wisdom of the wives. In Measure for Measure, the injustice of the

¹ Coxcomb: here, fool (Othello, V. 2); and compare King Lear, I. 4.

judges, and the corrupt cowardice of the brother, are opposed to the victorious truth and adamantine purity of a woman. In *Coriolanus*, the mother's counsel, acted upon in time, would have saved her son from all evil; his momentary forgetfulness of it is his ruin; her prayer at last granted, saves him — not, indeed, from death, but from the curse of living as the destroyer of his country.

And what shall I say of *Julia*, constant against the fickleness of a lover who is a mere wicked child? — of *Helena*, against the petulance and insult of a careless youth? — of the patience of *Hero*, the passion of *Beatrice*, and the calmly devoted wisdom of the “unlessoned girl,” who appears among the helplessness, the blindness, and the vindictive passions of men, as a gentle angel, to save merely by her presence, and defeat the worst intensities of crime by her smile?

Observe, further, among all the principal figures in Shakespeare's plays, there is only one weak woman — *Ophelia*; and it is because she fails *Hamlet* at the critical moment, and is not, and cannot in her nature be, a guide to him when he needs her most, that all the bitter catastrophe follows. Finally, though there are three wicked women among the principal figures, *Lady Macbeth*, *Regan*, and *Goneril*, they are felt at once to be frightful exceptions to the ordinary laws of life; fatal in their influence also in proportion to the power for good which they have abandoned.

Such, in broad light, is Shakespeare's testimony to the position and character of women in human life. He represents them as infallibly faithful and wise counselors, — incorruptibly just and pure examples — strong always to sanctify, even when they cannot save.



Not as in any wise comparable in knowledge of the nature of man, — still less in his understanding of the causes and courses of fate, — but only as the writer who has given us the broadest view of the conditions and modes of ordinary thought in modern society, I ask you next to receive the witness of Walter Scott.

I put aside his merely romantic prose writings as of no value: and though the early romantic poetry is very beautiful, its testimony is of no weight, other than that of a boy's ideal. But his true works, studied from Scottish life, bear a true witness, and in the whole range of these there are but three men who reach the heroic type* — Dandie Dinmont, Rob Roy, and Claverhouse: of these, one is a border farmer; another a freebooter; the third a soldier in a bad cause. And these touch the ideal of heroism only in their courage and faith, together with a strong, but uncultivated, or mistakenly applied, intellectual power; while his younger men are the gentlemanly playthings of fantastic fortune, and only by aid (or accident) of that fortune, survive, not vanquish, the trials they involuntarily sustain. Of any disciplined, or consistent character, earnest in a purpose wisely conceived, or dealing with forms of hostile evil, definitely challenged, and resolutely subdued, there is no trace in his conceptions of men. Whereas in his imaginations of women, — in the characters of Ellen Douglas, of Flora McIvor, Rose Brad-

* I ought, in order to make this assertion fully understood, to have noted the various weaknesses which lower the ideal of other great characters of men in the Waverley novels — the selfishness and narrowness of thought in Redgauntlet, the weak religious enthusiasm in Edward Glendenning, and the like; and I ought to have noticed that there are several quite perfect characters sketched sometimes in the backgrounds; three — let us accept joyously this courtesy to England and her soldiers — are English officers: Colonel Gardiner, Colonel Talbot, and Colonel Mannering.

wardine, Catherine Seyton, Diana Vernon, Lillas Redgauntlet, Alice Bridgenorth, Alice Lee, and Jeanie Deans, —with endless varieties of grace, tenderness, and intellectual power we find in all a quite infallible and inevitable sense of dignity and justice ; a fearless, instant, and untiring self-sacrifice to even the appearance of duty, much more to its real claims ; and, finally, a patient wisdom of deeply restrained affection, which does infinitely more than protect its objects from a momentary error ; it gradually forms, animates, and exalts the characters of the unworthy lovers, until, at the close of the tale, we are just able, and no more, to take patience in hearing of their unmerited success.

So that in all cases, with Scott as with Shakespeare, it is the woman who watches over, teaches, and guides the youth ; it is never, by any chance, the youth who watches over or educates his mistress.

Next, take, though more briefly, graver and deeper testimony — that of the great Italians and Greeks. You know well the plan of Dante's great poem — that it is a love-poem to his dead lady, a song of praise for her watch over his soul. Stooping only to pity, never to love, she yet saves him from destruction — saves him from hell. He is going eternally astray in despair ; she comes down from heaven to his help, and throughout the ascents of Paradise is his teacher, interpreting for him the most difficult truths, divine and human, and leading him, with rebuke upon rebuke, from star to star.

I do not insist upon Dante's conception ; if I began I could not cease : besides, you might think this a wild imagination of one poet's heart. So I will rather read to you a few verses of the deliberate writing of a knight

of Pisa¹ to his living lady, wholly characteristic of the feeling of all the noblest men of the thirteenth century, preserved among many other such records of knightly honor and love, which Dante Rossetti has gathered for us from among the early Italian poets.

For lo! thy law is passed
That this my love should manifestly be
To serve and honor thee :
And so I do ; and my delight is full,
Accepted for the servant of thy rule.

Without almost, I am all rapturous,
Since thus my will was set
To serve, thou flower of joy, thine excellence :
Nor ever seems it anything could rouse
A pain or regret,
But on thee dwells mine every thought and sense :
Considering that from thee all virtues spread
As from a fountain head, —
That in thy gift is wisdom's best avail,
And honor without fail ;
With whom each sovereign good dwells separate,
Fulfilling the perfection of thy state.

Lady, since I conceived
Thy pleasurable aspect in my heart,
My life has been apart
In shining brightness and the place of truth ;
Which till that time, good sooth,
Groped among shadows in a darken'd place,
Where many hours and days
It hardly ever had remember'd good.
But now my servitude
Is thine, and I am full of joy and rest.
A man from a wild beast
Thou madest me, since for thy love I lived.

¹ Pisa (Pee'sah).

You may think, perhaps, a Greek knight would have had a lower estimate of women than this Christian lover. His own spiritual subjection to them was indeed not so absolute; but as regards their own personal character, it was only because you could not have followed me so easily, that I did not take the Greek women instead of Shakespeare's; and instance, for chief ideal types of human beauty and faith, the simple mother's and wife's heart of *Andromache*¹; the divine, yet rejected wisdom of *Cassandra*; the playful kindness and simple princess-life of happy *Nausicaa*²; the housewifely calm of that of *Penelope*,³ with its watch upon the sea; the ever patient, fearless, hopelessly devoted piety of the sister, and daughter, in *Antigone*⁴; the bowing down of *Iphigenia*,⁵ lamb-like and silent; and, finally, the expectation of the resurrection, made clear to the soul of the Greeks in the return from her grave of that *Alcestis*, who, to save her husband, had passed calmly through the bitterness of death.

Now I could multiply witness upon witness of this kind upon you if I had time. I would take Chaucer, and show you why he wrote a *Legend of Good Women*, but no *Legend of Good Men*. I would take Spenser, and show you how all his fairy knights are sometimes deceived and sometimes vanquished; but the soul of *Una*⁶ is never darkened, and the spear of *Britomart*⁷ is never broken. Nay, I could go back into the mythical⁸ teaching of the most ancient times, and show you how the great people,

¹ *Andromache* (An-drom'a-kē).

⁴ *Antigone* (An-tig'o-nē).

² *Nausicaa* (Nau-sic'a-ah).

⁵ *Iphigenia* (If-i-ge-ni'ah).

³ *Penelope* (Pe-nel'o-pe).

⁶ *Una*: a beautiful woman, the impersonation of Truth, in Spenser's poem of the "Faery Queene."

⁷ *Britomart*: the impersonation of Purity in Spenser's "Faery Queene."

⁸ *Mythical*: fabulous.

— by one of whose princesses it was appointed that the Lawgiver of all the earth should be educated rather than by his own kindred ; — how that great Egyptian people, wisest then of nations, gave to their Spirit of Wisdom the form of a woman ; and into her hand, for a symbol, the weaver's shuttle : and how the name and the form of that spirit, adopted, believed, and obeyed by the Greeks, became that Athena of the olive-helm, and cloudy shield, to whose faith you owe, down to this date, whatever you hold most precious in art, in literature, or in types of national virtue.

But I will not wander into this distant and mythical element ; I will only ask you to give its legitimate value to the testimony of these great poets and men of the world, — consistent as you see it is on this head. I will ask you whether it can be supposed that these men, in the main work of their lives, are amusing themselves with a fictitious and idle view of the relations between man and woman ; — nay, worse than fictitious or idle ; for a thing may be imaginary, yet desirable, if it were possible ; but this, their ideal of women, is, according to our common idea of the marriage relation, wholly undesirable. The woman, we say, is not to guide, nor even to think for herself. The man is always to be the wiser ; he is to be the thinker, the ruler, the superior in knowledge and discretion, as in power. Is it not somewhat important to make up our minds on this matter ? Are all these great men mistaken, or are we ? Are Shakespeare and *Æschylus*,¹ Dante and Homer, merely dressing dolls for us ; or, worse than dolls, unnatural visions, the realization of which, were it possible, would bring anarchy into all households and ruin into all affections ? Nay, if you could suppose

¹ *Æschylus* (Es'ke-lus) : a celebrated Greek poet.

this, take lastly the evidence of facts, given by the human heart itself. In all Christian ages which have been remarkable for their purity or progress, there has been absolute yielding of obedient devotion, by the lover, to his mistress. I say *obedient* — not merely enthusiastic and worshipping in imagination, but entirely subject, receiving from the beloved woman, however young, not only the encouragement, the praise, and the reward of all toil, but so far as any choice is open, or any question difficult of decision, the *direction* of all toil. That chivalry,¹ to the abuse and dishonor of which are attributable primarily whatever is cruel in war, unjust in peace, or corrupt and ignoble in domestic relations; and to the original purity and power of which we owe the defence alike of faith, of law, and of love; — that chivalry, I say, in its very first conception of honorable life, assumes the subjection of the young knight to the command — should it even be the command in caprice — of his lady. It assumes this, because its masters knew that the first and necessary impulse of every truly taught and knightly heart is this of blind service to its lady; that where that true faith and captivity are not, all wayward and wicked passions must be; and that in this rapturous obedience to the single love of his youth, is the sanctification of all man's strength, and the continuance of all his purposes. And this, not because such obedience would be safe, or honorable, were it ever rendered to the unworthy; but because it ought to be impossible for every noble youth — it *is* impossible for every one rightly trained — to love any one whose gentle counsel he cannot trust, or whose prayerful command he can hesitate to obey.

¹ **Chivalry**: originally the qualifications required for knighthood, such as courtesy, valor, and dexterity in arms.

I do not insist by any farther argument on this, for I think it should commend itself at once to your knowledge of what has been and to your feelings of what should be. You cannot think that the buckling on of the knight's armor by his lady's hand was a mere caprice of romantic fashion. It is the type of an eternal truth — that the soul's armor is never well set to the heart unless a woman's hand has braced it; and it is only when she braces it loosely that the honor of manhood fails. Know you not those lovely lines — I would they were learned by all youthful ladies of England : —

“ Ah, wasteful woman ! — she who may
On her sweet self set her own price,
Knowing he cannot choose but pay —
How has she cheapened Paradise !
How given for nought her priceless gift,
How spoiled the bread and spilled the wine,
Which, spent with due, respective thrift,
Had made brutes men, and men divine ! ”¹

This much, then, respecting the relations of lovers I believe you will accept. But what we too often doubt is the fitness of the continuance of such a relation throughout the whole of human life. We think it right in the lover and mistress, not in the husband and wife. That is to say, we think that a reverent and tender duty is due to one whose affection we still doubt, and whose character we as yet do but partially and distantly discern; and that this reverence and duty are to be withdrawn when the affection has become wholly and limitlessly our own, and the character has been so sifted and tried that we fear not to

¹ Coventry Patmore, “The Angel in the House” — The Betrothal — Part VII., The Queen.

entrust it with the happiness of our lives. Do you not see how ignoble this is as well as how unreasonable? Do you not feel that marriage — when it is marriage at all, — is only the seal which marks the vowed transition of temporary into untiring service, and of fitful into eternal love?

But how, you will ask, is the idea of this guiding function of the woman reconcilable with a true wifely subjection? Simply in that it is a *guiding*, not a determining, function. Let me try to show you briefly how these powers seem to be rightly distinguishable.

We are foolish, and without excuse foolish, in speaking of the "superiority" of one sex to the other, as if they could be compared in similar things. Each has what the other has not: each completes the other, and is completed by the other: they are in nothing alike, and the happiness and perfection of both depends on each asking and receiving from the other what the other only can give.

Now their separate characters are briefly these. The man's power is active, progressive, defensive. He is eminently the doer, the creator, the discoverer, the defender.

His intellect is for speculation and invention; his energy for adventure, for war, and for conquest, wherever war is just, wherever conquest necessary. But the woman's power is for rule, not for battle, — and her intellect is not for invention or creation, but for sweet ordering, arrangement and decision. She sees the qualities of things, their claims and their places. Her great function is Praise: she enters into no contest, but infallibly judges the crown of contest. By her office, and place, she is protected from all danger and temptation. The man, in his rough work in open world, must encounter all peril and trial: — to him, therefore, the failure, the offence, the inevitable error:

often he must be wounded, or subdued, often misled, and *always* hardened. But he guards the woman from all this; within his house, as ruled by her, unless she herself has sought it, need enter no danger, no temptation, no cause of error or offence. This is the true nature of home—it is the place of Peace; the shelter, not only from all injury, but from all terror, doubt, and division. In so far as it is not this, it is not home: so far as the anxieties of the outer life penetrate into it, and the inconsistently-minded, unknown, unloved, or hostile society of the outer world is allowed by either husband or wife to cross the threshold, it ceases to be home; it is then only a part of that outer world which you have roofed over, and lighted fire in. But so far as it is a sacred place, a vestal¹ temple, a temple of the hearth watched over by Household Gods, before whose faces none may come but those whom they can receive with love,—so far as it is this, and roof and fire are types only of a nobler shade and light,—shade as of the rock in a weary land, and light as of the Pharos² in the stormy sea;—so far it vindicates the name, and fulfils the praise, of home.

And wherever a true wife comes, this home is always round her. The stars only may be over her head; the glow-worm in the night-cold grass may be the only fire at her foot: but home is yet wherever she is; and for a noble woman it stretches far round her, better than ceiled with cedar, or painted with vermilion, shedding its quiet light far, for those who else were homeless.

¹ *Vestal*: from Vesta, the virgin goddess of the domestic hearth; hence pure, chaste.

² *Pharos*: originally a lighthouse built on the isle of Pharos, at the entrance of the port of Alexandria, Egypt. In general, any lighthouse.

This, then, I believe to be, — will you not admit it to be, — the woman's true place and power? But do not you see that to fulfil this, she must — as far as one can use such terms of a human creature — be incapable of error? So far as she rules, all must be right, or nothing is. She must be enduringly, incorruptibly good; instinctively, infallibly wise — wise, not for self-development, but for self-renunciation: wise, not that she may set herself above her husband, but that she may never fail from his side: wise, not with the narrowness of insolent and loveless pride, but with the passionate gentleness of an infinitely variable, because infinitely applicable, modesty of service — the true changefulness of woman. In that great sense — “*La donna e mobile*,”¹ not “*Qual pium' al vento* ;”² no, nor yet “*Variable as the shade, by the light quivering aspen made* ;”³ but variable as the *light*, manifold in fair and serene division, that it may take the color of all that it falls upon, and exalt it.

II. I have been trying, thus far, to show you what should be the place, and what the power of woman. Now, secondly, we ask, What kind of education is to fit her for these?

And if you indeed think this a true conception of her office and dignity, it will not be difficult to trace the course of education which would fit her for the one, and raise her to the other.

The first of our duties to her — no thoughtful persons now doubt this, — is to secure for her such physical training and exercise as may confirm her health, and perfect

¹ “*La donna*,” etc.: “Woman is changeable.”

² “*Qual pium'*,” etc.: “Like a feather in the wind.”

³ Scott's *Marmion*, Canto VI. Stanza 30.

her beauty, the highest refinement of that beauty being unattainable without splendor of activity and of delicate strength. To perfect her beauty, I say, and increase its power; it cannot be too powerful, nor shed its sacred light too far: only remember that all physical freedom is vain to produce beauty without a corresponding freedom of heart. There are two passages of that poet who is distinguished, it seems to me, from all others — not by power, but by exquisite *rightness* — which point you to the source, and describe to you, in a few syllables, the completion of womanly beauty. I will read the introductory stanzas, but the last is the one I wish you specially to notice:

“Three years she grew in sun and shower,
Then nature said, a lovelier flower
On earth was never sown.
This child I to myself will take;
She shall be mine, and I will make
A lady of my own.

“Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse; and with me
The girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower
Shall feel an overseeing power
To kindle, or restrain.

“The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her, for her the willow bend;
Nor shall she fail to see
Even in the motions of the storm,
Grace that shall mould the maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

“And *vital feelings of delight*
Shall rear her form to stately height, —

Her virgin bosom swell.
 Such *thoughts* to Lucy I will give,
 While she and I together live,
 Here in this happy dell."¹

"*Vital* feelings of delight," observe. There are deadly feelings of delight ; but the natural ones are vital, necessary to every life.

And they must be feelings of delight, if they are to be vital. Do not think you can make a girl lovely, if you do not make her happy. There is not one restraint you put on a good girl's nature — there is not one check you give to her instincts of affection or of effort — which will not be indelibly written on her features, with a hardness which is all the more painful because it takes away the brightness from the eyes of innocence, and the charm from the brow of virtue.

This for the means : now note the end. Take from the same poet, in two lines, a perfect description of womanly beauty —

"A countenance in which did meet
 Sweet records, promises as sweet."²

The perfect loveliness of a woman's countenance can only consist in that majestic peace, which is founded in the memory of happy and useful years, — full of sweet records ; and from the joining of this with that yet more majestic childishness, which is still full of change and promise ; — opening always — modest at once, and bright, with hope of better things to be won, and to be bestowed. There is no old age where there is still that promise — it is eternal youth.

¹ Wordsworth's Poems of the Imagination, X.

² Wordsworth's Poems of the Imagination, VIII.

Thus, then, you have first to mould her physical frame, and then, as the strength she gains will permit you, to fill and temper her mind with all knowledge and thoughts which tend to confirm its natural instincts of justice, and refine its natural tact of love.

All such knowledge should be given her as may enable her to understand, and even to aid, the work of men : and yet it should be given, not as knowledge, — not as if it were, or could be, for her an object to know ; but only to feel, and to judge. It is of no moment, as a matter of pride or perfectness in herself, whether she knows many languages or one ; but it is of the utmost, that she should be able to show kindness to a stranger, and to understand the sweetness of a stranger's tongue. It is of no moment to her own worth or dignity that she should be acquainted with this science or that ; but it is of the highest that she should be trained in habits of accurate thought ; that she should understand the meaning, the inevitableness, and the loveliness of natural laws, and follow at least some one path of scientific attainment, as far as to the threshold of that bitter Valley of Humiliation, into which only the wisest and bravest of men can descend, owning themselves for ever children, gathering pebbles on a boundless shore. It is of little consequence how many positions of cities she knows, or how many dates or events, or how many names of celebrated persons—it is not the object of education to turn a woman into a dictionary ; but it is deeply necessary that she should be taught to enter with her whole personality into the history she reads ; to picture the passages of it vitally in her own bright imagination ; to apprehend, with her fine instincts, the pathetic circumstances and dramatic relations, which the historian too

often only eclipses by his reasoning, and disconnects by his arrangement : it is for her to trace the hidden equities of divine reward, and catch sight, through the darkness, of the fateful threads of woven fire that connect error with its retribution. But, chiefly of all, she is to be taught to extend the limits of her sympathy with respect to that history which is being for her determined, as the moments pass in which she draws her peaceful breath : and to the contemporary calamity which, were it but rightly mourned by her, would recur no more hereafter. She is to exercise herself in imagining what would be the effects upon her mind and conduct, if she were daily brought into the presence of the suffering which is not the less real because shut from her sight. She is to be taught somewhat to understand the nothingness of the proportion which that little world in which she lives and loves, bears to the world in which God lives and loves ; — and solemnly she is to be taught to strive that her thoughts of piety may not be feeble in proportion to the number they embrace, nor her prayer more languid than it is for the momentary relief from pain of her husband or her child, when it is uttered for the multitudes of those who have none to love them, — and is, “for all who are desolate and oppressed.”

If there were to be any difference between a girl's education and a boy's, I should say that of the two the girl should be earlier led, as her intellect ripens faster, into deep and serious subjects ; and that her range of literature should be, not more, but less frivolous, calculated to add the qualities of patience and seriousness to her natural poignancy of thought and quickness of wit ; and also to keep her in a lofty and pure element of thought. I enter not now into any question of choice of books ; only be

sure that her books are not heaped up in her lap as they fall out of the package of the circulating library, wet with the last and lightest spray of the fountain of folly.

Or even of the fountain of wit ; for with respect to that sore temptation of novel-reading, it is not the badness of a novel that we should dread, but its overwrought interest. The weakest romance is not so stupefying as the lower forms of religious exciting literature, and the worst romance is not so corrupting as false history, false philosophy, or false political essays. But the best romance becomes dangerous, if, by its excitement, it renders the ordinary course of life uninteresting, and increases the morbid thirst for useless acquaintance with scenes in which we shall never be called upon to act.

I speak therefore of good novels only ; and our modern literature is particularly rich in types of such. Well read, indeed, these books have serious use, being nothing less than treatises on moral anatomy and chemistry ; studies of human nature in the elements of it. But I attach little weight to this function : they are hardly ever read with earnestness enough to permit them to fulfil it. The utmost they usually do is to enlarge somewhat the charity of a kind reader, or the bitterness of a malicious one ; for each will gather, from the novel, food for her own disposition. Those who are naturally proud and envious will learn from Thackeray to despise humanity ; those who are naturally gentle, to pity it ; those who are naturally shallow, to laugh at it. So, also, there might be a serviceable power in novels to bring before us, in vividness, a human truth which we had before dimly conceived ; but the temptation to picturesqueness of statement is so great, that often the best writers of fiction cannot resist it ; and

our views are rendered so violent and one-sided, that their vitality is rather a harm than good.

Without, however, venturing here on any attempt at decision how much novel-reading should be allowed, let me at least clearly assert this, that whether novels, or poetry, or history be read, they should be chosen, not for what is *out* of them, but for what is *in* them. The chance and scattered evil that may here and there haunt, or hide itself in, a powerful book, never does any harm to a noble girl; but the emptiness of an author oppresses her, and his amiable folly degrades her. And if she can have access to a good library of old and classical books, there need be no choosing at all. Keep the modern magazine and novel out of your girl's way: turn her loose into the old library every wet day, and let her alone. She will find what is good for her; you cannot: for there is just this difference between the making of a girl's character and a boy's—you may chisel a boy into shape, as you would a rock, or hammer him into it, if he be of a better kind, as you would a piece of bronze. But you cannot hammer a girl into anything. She grows as a flower does,—she will wither without sun; she will decay in her sheath, as the narcissus does, if you do not give her air enough; she may fall, and defile her head in dust, if you leave her without help at some moments of her life; but you cannot fetter her; she must take her own fair form and way, if she take any, and in mind as in body, must have always

“Her household motions light and free
And steps of virgin liberty.”¹

Let her loose in the library, I say, as you do a fawn in a

¹ Wordsworth's Poems of the Imagination, VIII.

field. It knows the bad weeds twenty times better than you ; and the good ones too, and will eat some bitter and prickly ones, good for it, which you had not the slightest thought were good.

Then, in art, keep the finest models before her, and let her practice in all accomplishments be accurate and thorough, so as to enable her to understand more than she accomplishes. I say the finest models,—that is to say, the truest, simplest, usefullest. Note those epithets ; they will range through all the arts. Try them in music, where you might think them the least applicable. I say the truest, that in which the notes most closely and faithfully express the meaning of the words, or the character of intended emotion ; again, the simplest, that in which the meaning and melody are attained with the fewest and most significant notes possible ; and, finally, the usefullest that music which makes the best words most beautiful, which enchants them in our memories each with its own glory of sound, and which applies them closest to the heart at the moment we need them.

) And not only in the material and in the course, but yet more earnestly in the spirit of it, let a girl's education be as serious as a boy's. You bring up your girls as if they were meant for sideboard ornaments, and then complain of their frivolity. Give them the same advantages that you give their brothers—appeal to the same grand instincts of virtue in them ; teach *them* also that courage and truth are the pillars of their being : do you think that they would not answer that appeal, brave and true as they are even now, when you know that there is hardly a girl's school in this Christian kingdom where the children's courage or sincerity would be thought of half so much im-

portance as their way of coming in at a door ; and when the whole system of society, as respects the mode of establishing them in life, is one rotten plague of cowardice and imposture — cowardice, in not daring to let them live, or love, except as their neighbors choose ; and imposture, in bringing, for the purpose of our own pride, the full glow of the world's worst vanity upon a girl's eyes, at the very period when the whole happiness of her future existence depends upon her remaining undazzled ?

There is one more help which we cannot do without — one which, alone, has sometimes done more than all other influences besides, — the help of wild and fair nature. Hear this of the education of Joan of Arc :¹

"The education of this poor girl was mean according to the present standard ; was ineffably grand, according to a purer philosophic standard ; and only not good for our age, because for us it would be unattainable. . . .

"Next after her spiritual advantages, she owed most to the advantages of her situation. The fountain of Domrémy was on the brink of a boundless forest ; and it was haunted to that degree by fairies, that the parish priest (*cure*) was obliged to read mass there once a year, in order to keep them in any decent bounds. . . .

"But the forests of Domrémy — those were the glories of the land, for in them abode mysterious powers and ancient secrets that towered into tragic strength. 'Abbeys there were, and abbey windows,' — 'like Moorish temples of the Hindoos,' that exercised even princely power both

¹ **Joan of Arc** : a French peasant maid of the fifteenth century, who, by her bravery in battle, defeated the English at Orleans (*Orléans*) and elsewhere, and secured the crown to Charles VII. of France. She fell into the hands of the English in 1431, and was burned by them as a sorceress.

in Touraine and in the German Diets.¹ These had their sweet bells that pierced the forests for many a league at matins or vespers,² and each its own dreamy legend. Few enough, and scattered enough, were these abbeys, so as in no degree to disturb the deep solitude of the region; yet many enough to spread a network or awning of Christian sanctity over what else might have seemed a heathen wilderness." *

Now you cannot, indeed, have here in England, woods eighteen miles deep to the centre; but you can, perhaps, keep a fairy or two for your children yet, if you wish to keep them. But *do* you wish it? Suppose you had each, at the back of your houses, a garden large enough for your children to play in, with just as much lawn as would give them room to run,—no more—and that you could not change your abode; but that, if you chose, you could double your income, or quadruple it, by digging a coal-shaft in the middle of the lawn, and turning the flower-beds into heaps of coke. Would you do it? I think not. I can tell you, you would be wrong if you did, though it gave you income sixty-fold instead of four-fold.

Yet this is what you are doing with all England. The whole country is but a little garden, not more than enough for your children to run on the lawns of, if you would let them *all* run there. And this little garden you will turn into furnace-ground, and fill with heaps of cinders, if you can; and those children of yours, not you, will suffer for it. For the fairies will not be all banished; there are

¹ **Diets:** legislative assemblies.

² **Matins or vespers:** morning or evening prayers.

* "Joan of Arc: in reference to M. Michelet's *History of France*." De Quincey's Works, Vol. III. p. 217.

fairies of the furnace as of the wood, and their first gifts seem to be "sharp arrows of the mighty";¹ but their last gifts are "coals of juniper."¹

And yet I cannot — though there is no part of my subject that I feel more — press this upon you; for we made so little use of the power of nature while we had it that we shall hardly feel what we have lost. Just on the other side of the Mersey you have your Snowdon,² and your Menai Straits,³ and that mighty granite rock beyond the moors of Anglesea, splendid in its heatherly⁴ crest, and foot planted in the deep sea, once thought of as sacred — a divine promontory, looking westward; the Holy Head or Headland, still not without awe when its red light glares first through storm. These are the hills, and these the bays and blue inlets, which, among the Greeks, would have been always loved, always fateful in influence on the national mind. That Snowdon is your Parnassus⁵; but where are its Muses? That Holyhead mountain is your Island of Ægina,⁶ but where is its Temple to Minerva?

Shall I read you what the Christian Minerva had achieved under the shadow of our Parnassus, up to the year 1848? — Here is a little account of a Welsh school, from page 261 of the report on Wales, published by the Committee of Council on Education. This is a school close to a town containing 5000 persons: —

¹ Psalms cxx. 4.

² **Snowdon**: the highest mountain in Wales.

³ **Menai** (Men'i): Menai Straits separate the island of Anglesea (Ang'-g'l-see) from the coast of Wales.

⁴ **Heatherly**: covered with heather.

⁵ **Parnassus**: a mountain in Greece, the fabled abode of the god Apollo and the Muses.

⁶ **Island of Ægina**: an island of Greece, once famous for its magnificent temples.

"I then called up a larger class, most of whom had recently come to the school. Three girls repeatedly declared they had never heard of Christ, and two that they had never heard of God. Two out of six thought Christ was on earth now ('they might have had a worse thought, perhaps'); three knew nothing about the crucifixion. Four out of seven did not know the names of the months, nor the number of days in a year. They had no notion of addition beyond two and two, or three and three; their minds were perfect blanks."

Oh, ye women of England! from the Princess of that Wales to the simplest of you, do not think your own children can be brought into their true fold of rest while these are scattered on the hills, as sheep having no shepherd. And do not think your daughters can be trained to the truth of their own human beauty, while the pleasant places, which God made at once for their school-room and their play-ground, lie desolate and defiled. You cannot baptize them rightly in those inch-deep fonts of yours, unless you baptize them also in the sweet waters which the great Lawgiver¹ strikes forth for ever from the rocks of your native land — waters which a Pagan would have worshipped in their purity, and you only worship with pollution. You cannot lead your children faithfully to those narrow axe-hewn church altars of yours, while the dark azure altars in heaven — the mountains that sustain your island throne, — mountains on which a Pagan would have seen the powers of heaven rest in every wreathed cloud — remain for you without inscription; altars built, not to, but by, an Unknown God.²

¹ **Lawgiver**: a name usually given to Moses (see Numbers xxi. 18 and xx. 11); but here used of the Creator.

² See Acts xvii. 23

III. Thus far, then, of the nature, thus far of the teaching, of woman, and thus of her household office, and queenliness. We come now to our last, our widest question, — What is her queenly office with respect to the state?

Generally we are under an impression that a man's duties are public, and a woman's private. But this is not altogether so. A man has a personal work or duty, relating to his own home, and a public work or duty, which is the expansion of the other, relating to the state. So a woman has a personal work and duty, relating to her own home, and a public work and duty, which is also the expansion of that.

Now the man's work for his own home is, as has been said, to secure its maintenance, progress, and defence; the woman's to secure its order, comfort, and loveliness.

Expand both these functions. The man's duty, as a member of a commonwealth, is to assist in the maintenance, in the advance, in the defence of the state. The woman's duty, as a member of the commonwealth, is to assist in the ordering, in the comforting, and in the beautiful adornment of the state.

What the man is at his own gate, defending it, if need be, against insult and spoil, that also, not in a less, but in a more devoted measure, he is to be at the gate of his country, leaving his home, if need be, even to the spoiler, to do his more incumbent work there.

And, in like manner, what the woman is to be within her gates, as the centre of order, the balm of distress, and the mirror of beauty; that she is also to be without her gates, where order is more difficult, distress more imminent, loveliness more rare.

And as within the human heart there is always set an

instinct for all its real duties,—an instinct which you cannot quench, but only warp and corrupt if you withdraw it from its true purpose;—as there is the intense instinct of love, which, rightly disciplined, maintains all the sanctities of life and, misdirected, undermines them; and *must* do either the one or the other; so there is in the human heart an inextinguishable instinct, the love of power, which, rightly directed, maintains all the majesty of law and life, and misdirected, wrecks them.

Deep rooted in the innermost life of the heart of man, and of the heart of woman, God set it there, and God keeps it there. Vainly, as falsely, you blame or rebuke the desire of power!—For Heaven's sake, and for Man's sake, desire it all you can. But *what* power? That is all the question. Power to destroy? the lion's limb, and the dragon's breath? Not so. Power to heal, to redeem, to guide and to guard. Power of the sceptre and shield; the power of the royal hand that heals in touching,—that binds the fiend and looses the captive; the throne that is founded on the rock of Justice, and descended from only by steps of mercy. Will you not covet such power as this, and seek such throne as this, and be no more housewives, but queens?

It is now long, since the women of England arrogated, universally, a title which once belonged to nobility only, and, having once been in the habit of accepting the simple title of gentlewoman, as correspondent to that of gentleman, insisted on the privilege of assuming the title of "Lady,"* which properly corresponds only to the title of "Lord."

* I wish there were a true order of chivalry instituted for our English youth of certain ranks, in which both boy and girl should receive, at a given age,

I do not blame them for this ; but only for their narrow motive in this. I would have them desire and claim the title of Lady, provided they claim, not merely the title, but the office and duty signified by it. Lady means "bread-giver" or "loaf-giver," and Lord means "maintainer of laws," and both titles have reference, not to the law which is maintained in the house, nor to the bread which is given to the household ; but to law maintained for the multitude, and to bread broken among the multitude. So that a Lord has legal claim only to his title in so far as he is the maintainer of the justice of the Lord of Lords ; and a Lady has legal claim to her title, only so far as she communicates that help to the poor, representatives of her Master, which women once, ministering to Him of their substance, were permitted to extend to that Master Himself ; and when she is known, as He Himself once was, in breaking of bread.

And this beneficent and legal dominion, this power of the Dominus, or House Lord, and of the Domina, or House Lady, is great and venerable, not in the number of those through whom it has lineally descended, but in the number of those whom it grasps within its sway ; it is always regarded with reverent worship wherever its dynasty is founded on its duty, and its ambition co-relative with its beneficence. Your fancy is pleased with the thought of being noble ladies, with a train of vassals.¹

their knighthood and ladyhood by true title ; attainable only by certain probation and trial both of character and accomplishment ; and to be forfeited, on conviction, by their peers, of any dishonorable act. Such an institution would be entirely, and with all noble results, possible, in a nation which loved honor. That it would not be possible among us is not to the discredit of the scheme.

¹ Vassals : dependents.

Be it so : you cannot be too noble, and your train cannot be too great ; but see to it that your train is of vassals whom you serve and feed, not merely of slaves who serve and feed *you* ; and that the multitude which obeys you is of those whom you have comforted, not oppressed, — whom you have redeemed, not led into captivity.

And this, which is true of the lower or household dominion, is equally true of the queenly dominion ; — that highest dignity is open to you, if you will also accept that highest duty. *Rex et Regina*¹ — *Roi et Reine*² — “*Right-doers*” ; they differ from the Lady and Lord, in that their power is supreme over the mind as over the person — that they not only feed and clothe, but direct and teach. And whether consciously or not, you must be, in many a heart, enthroned : there is no putting by that crown ; queens you must always be ; queens to your lovers ; queens to your husbands and your sons ; queens of higher mystery to the world beyond, which bows itself, and will for ever bow, before the myrtle crown, and the stainless sceptre, of womanhood. But, alas ! you are too often idle and careless queens, grasping at majesty in the least things, while you abdicate it in the greatest ; and leaving misrule and violence to work their will among men, in defiance of the power, which, holding straight in gift from the Prince of all Peace, the wicked among you betray, and the good forget.

“Prince of Peace.” Note that name. When kings rule in that name, and nobles, and the judges of the earth, they

¹ *Rex et Regina* : king and queen, derived, probably, from *rego*, to direct or guide straight, hence to do right.

² *Roi et Reine* : king and queen, French, derived from the Latin *rex et regina*.

also, in their narrow place, and mortal measure, receive the power of it. There are no other rulers than they: other rule than theirs is but *misrule*; they who govern verily "*Dei gratiâ*"¹ are all princes, yes, or princesses, of peace. There is not a war in the world, no, nor an injustice, but you women are answerable for it; not in that you have provoked, but in that you have not hindered. Men, by their nature, are prone to fight; they will fight for any cause, or for none. It is for you to choose their cause for them, and to forbid them when there is no cause. There is no suffering, no injustice, no misery in the earth, but the guilt of it lies lastly with you. Men can bear the sight of it, but you should not be able to bear it. Men may tread it down without sympathy in their own struggle; but men are feeble in sympathy, and contracted in hope; it is you only who can feel the depths of pain; and conceive the way of its healing. Instead of trying to do this, you turn away from it; you shut yourselves within your park walls and garden gates; and you are content to know that there is beyond them a whole world in wilderness—a world of secrets which you dare not penetrate; and of sufferings which you dare not conceive.

I tell you that this is to me quite the most amazing among the phenomena of humanity. I am surprised at no depths to which, when once warped from its honor, that humanity can be degraded. I do not wonder at the miser's death, with his hands, as they relax, dropping gold. I do not wonder at the sensualist's life, with the shroud wrapped about his feet. I do not wonder at the single-handed murder of a single victim, done by the assassin in the darkness of the railway, or reed-shadow of the marsh. I do not

¹ *Dei gratiâ*: by the grace or favor of God.

even wonder at the myriad-handed murder of multitudes, done boastfully in the daylight, by the frenzy of nations, and the immeasurable, unimaginable guilt, heaped up from hell to heaven, of their priests, and kings. But this is wonderful to me — oh, how wonderful! — to see the tender and delicate woman among you, with her child at her breast, and a power, if she would wield it, over it, and over its father, purer than the air of heaven, and stronger than the seas of earth — nay, a magnitude of blessing which her husband would not part with for all that earth itself, though it were made of one entire and perfect chrysolite¹: — to see her abdicate this majesty, to play at precedence with her next-door neighbor! This is wonderful — oh, wonderful! — to see her, with every innocent feeling fresh within her, go out in the morning into her garden to play with the fringes of its guarded flowers, and lift their heads when they are drooping, with her happy smile on her face, and no cloud upon her brow, because there is a little wall around her place of peace: and yet she knows, in her heart, if she would only look for its knowledge, that, outside of that little rose-covered wall, the wild grass, to the horizon, is torn up by the agony of men, and beat level by the drift of their life-blood.

Have you ever considered what a deep under meaning there lies, or at least may be read, if we choose, in our custom of strewing flowers before those whom we think most happy? Do you suppose it is merely to deceive them into the hope that happiness is always to fall thus in showers at their feet? — that wherever they pass they will tread on herbs of sweet scent, and that the rough ground will be made smooth for them by depths of roses? So

¹ *Chrysolite*: a pale, yellowish-green, transparent gem. See *Othello*, Act V. Scene 2.

surely as they believe that, they will have, instead, to walk on bitter herbs and thorns; and the only softness to their feet will be of snow. But it is not thus intended they should believe; there is a better meaning in that old custom. The path of a good woman is indeed strewn with flowers: but they rise behind her steps, not before them. "Her feet have touched the meadows, and left the daisies rosy."¹ You think that only a lover's fancy;—false and vain! How if it could be true? You think this also, perhaps, only a poet's fancy—

"E'en the slight harebell raised its head
Elastic from her airy tread."²

But it is little to say of a woman, that she only does not destroy where she passes. She should revive; the harebells should bloom, not stoop, as she passes. You think I am going into a wild hyperbole³? Pardon me, not a whit—I mean what I say in calm English, spoken in resolute truth. You have heard it said—(and I believe there is more than fancy even in that saying, but let it pass for a fanciful one)—that flowers only flourish rightly in the garden of some one who loves them. I know you would like that to be true; you would think it a pleasant magic if you could flush your flowers into brighter bloom by a kind look upon them: nay, more, if your look had the power, not only to cheer, but to guard them—if you could bid the black blight turn away, and the knotted caterpillar spare—if you could bid the dew fall upon them in the drought, and say to the south wind, in frost—"Come, thou south,

¹ Tennyson's "Maud."

² Sir Walter Scott's *Lady of the Lake*, Canto I. 18.

³ **Hyperbole**; exaggerated statement.

and breathe upon my garden, that the spices of it may flow out.”¹ This you would think a great thing? And do you think it not a greater thing, that all this (and how much more than this!) you *can* do, for fairer flowers than these — flowers that could bless you for having blessed them, and will love you for having loved them; — flowers that have eyes like yours, and thoughts like yours, and lives like yours; which, once saved, you save for ever? Is this only a little power? Far among the moorlands and the rocks, — far in the darkness of the terrible streets, — these feeble florets are lying, with all their fresh leaves torn, and their stems broken — will you never go down to them, nor set them in order in their little fragrant beds, nor fence them in their shuddering from the fierce wind? Shall morning follow morning, for you, but not for them; and the dawn rise to watch, far away, those frantic Dances of Death,² but no dawn rise to breathe upon these living banks of wild violet, and woodbine, and rose; nor call to you, through your casement, — call (not giving you the name of the English poet’s lady, but the name of Dante’s great Matilda,³ who on the edge of happy Lethe,⁴ stood, wreathing flowers with flowers), saying: —

“Come into the garden, Maud,
For the black bat, night, has flown,

¹ See Solomon’s Song, iv. 16.

² **Dances of Death**: here, the pleasures of vice.

³ **Matilda**: the Italian countess, Matilda, a benefactress of the Church.

⁴ **Lethe** (Le’the): in Greek mythology, a river of the underworld. Whoso drank of its waters forgot the past. Here, however, Lethe is a stream in the terrestrial paradise of Dante’s vision. Its waters have a double power —

“Power to take away
Remembrance of offence, . . . to bring
Remembrance back of every good deed done.”

— *Dante’s Purgatorio*, xxix. 134.

And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad
And the musk of the roses blown ?”¹

Will you not go down among them?—among those sweet living things, whose new courage, sprung from the earth with the deep color of heaven upon it, is starting up in strength of goodly spire ; and whose purity, washed from the dust, is opening, bud by bud, into the flower of promise ;—and still they turn to you, and for you, “The Larkspur listens — I hear, I hear ! And the Lily whispers — I wait.”¹

Did you notice that I missed two lines when I read you that first stanza ; and think that I had forgotten them ? Hear them now :—

“Come into the garden, Maud,
For the black bat, night, has flown ;
Come into the garden, Maud,
I am here at the gate, alone.”¹

Who is it, think you, who stands at the gate of this sweeter garden, alone, waiting for you ? Did you ever hear, not of a Maude, but a Madeleine,² who went down to her garden in the dawn, and found one waiting at the gate, whom she supposed to be the gardener ? Have you not sought Him often ;—sought Him in vain, all through the night ;—sought Him in vain at the gate of that old garden where the fiery sword is set ?³ He is never there ; but at the gate of *this* garden he is waiting always—waiting to take your hand—ready to go down to see the fruits of the valley, to see whether the vine has flourished, and the

¹ Tennyson’s “Come into the Garden, Maud.”

² **Madeleine** : the same as Magdalene. See John xx. 20.

³ See Genesis iii. 24.

pomegranate budded. There you shall see with Him the little tendrils of the vines that His hand is guiding — there you shall see the pomegranate springing where his hand cast the sanguine seed¹; — more: you shall see the troops of the angel keepers, that, with their wings, wave away the hungry birds from the pathsides where He has sown, and call to each other between the vineyard rows, “Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes.”² Oh — you queens — you queens! among the hills and happy greenwood of this land of yours, shall the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; and in your cities, shall the stones cry out against you, that they are the only pillows where the Son of Man can lay his head?

¹ **Sanguine seed**: the seeds of the pomegranate have the appearance of being blood-red in color.

² See Solomon's Song, ii. 15.

WAR.*

I SHALL divide the war of which I would speak to you into three heads. War for exercise or play; war for dominion; and, war for defence.

I. And first, of war for exercise or play. I speak of it primarily in this light, because, through all past history, manly war has been more of an exercise than anything else, among the classes who cause, and proclaim it. It is not a game to the conscript¹ or the pressed sailor²; but neither of these are the causers of it. To the governor who determines that war shall be, and to the youths who voluntarily adopt it as their profession, it has always been a grand pastime; and chiefly pursued because they had nothing else to do. And this is true without any exception. No king whose mind was fully occupied with the development of the inner resources of his kingdom, or with any other sufficing subject of thought, ever entered into war but on compulsion. No youth who was earnestly busy with any peaceful subject of study, or set on any serviceable course of action, ever voluntarily became a soldier. Occupy him early and wisely, in agriculture or business, in science or in literature, and he will never think of war otherwise than as a calamity. But leave him idle; and, the more brave

* From the Lecture on War in the "Crown of Wild Olive."

¹ Conscript: a man drafted or compelled by law to enter the army.

² Pressed sailor: a man seized by the press-gang and forced to enter the navy.

and active and capable he is by nature, the more he will thirst for some appointed field for action ; and find, in the passion and peril of battle, the only satisfying fulfilment of his unoccupied being. And from the earliest incipient civilization until now, the population of the earth divides itself, when you look at it widely, into two races ; one of workers, and the other of players — one tilling the ground, manufacturing, building, and otherwise providing for the necessities of life ; — the other part proudly idle, and continually therefore needing recreation, in which they use the productive and laborious orders partly as their cattle, and partly as their puppets or pieces in the game of death.

Now, remember, whatever virtue or goodness there may be in this game of war, rightly played, there is none when you thus play it with a multitude of small human pawns.¹

If you, the gentlemen of this or any other kingdom, choose to make your pastime of contest, do so, and welcome ; but set not up these unhappy peasant-pieces upon the green fielded board. If the wager is to be of death, lay it on your own heads, not theirs. A goodly struggle in the Olympic² dust, though it be the dust of the grave, the gods will look upon, and be with you in ; but they will not be with you, if you sit on the sides of the amphitheatre, whose steps are the mountains of earth, whose arena its valleys, to urge your peasant millions into gladiatorial war.³ You also, you tender and delicate women, for whom, and by whose command, all true battle has been,

¹ **Pawns** : common men or pieces used in playing chess.

² **Olympic** (from Olympus, a mountain range in Greece, thought to be the abode of Jupiter) : relating to the Olympic games — the greatest of the Greek festivals — held in honor of Jupiter.

³ **Gladiatorial war** : here, war fought for the entertainment of kings.

and must ever be ; you would perhaps shrink now, though you need not, from the thought of sitting as queens above set lists¹ where the jousting² game might be mortal. How much more, then, ought you to shrink from the thought of sitting above a theatre pit in which even a few condemned slaves were slaying each other only for your delight ! And do you *not* shrink from the *fact* of sitting above a theatre pit, where, — not condemned slaves, — but the best and bravest of the poor sons of your people, slay each other, — not man to man, — as the coupled gladiators ; but race to race, in duel of generations ? You would tell me, perhaps, that you do not sit to see this ; and it is indeed true, that the women of Europe — those who have no heart-interest of their own at peril in the contest — draw the curtains of their boxes, and muffle the openings ; so that from the pit of the circus of slaughter there may reach them only at intervals a half-heard cry and a murmur as of the wind's sighing, when myriads of souls expire. They shut out the death-cries ; and are happy, and talk wittily among themselves. That is the utter literal fact of what our ladies do in their pleasant lives.

Nay, you might answer, speaking for them — 'We do not let these wars come to pass for our play, nor by our carelessness ; we cannot help them. How can any final quarrel of nations be settled otherwise than by war ?' I cannot now delay to tell you how political quarrels might be otherwise settled. But grant that they cannot. Grant that no law of reason can be understood by nations ; no law of justice submitted to by them ; and that, while questions of a few acres, and of petty cash, can be determined

¹ **Lists** : an enclosure for a tournament, or jousting.

² **Jousting** : a mock battle between two knights.

by truth and equity, the questions which are to issue in the perishing or saving of kingdoms can be determined only by the truth of the sword, and the equity of the rifle. Grant this, and even then, judge if it will always be necessary for you to put your quarrel into the hearts of your poor, and sign your treaties with peasants' blood. You would be ashamed to do this in your own private position and power. Why should you not be ashamed also to do it in public place and power? If you quarrel with your neighbor, and the quarrel be indeterminable by law, and mortal, you and he do not send your footmen to Battersea Fields¹ to fight it out; nor do you set fire to his tenants' cottages, nor spoil their goods. You fight out your quarrel yourselves, and at your own danger, if at all. And you do not think it materially affects the arbitrament that one of you has a larger household than the other; so that, if the servants or tenants were brought into the field with their masters, the issue of the contest could not be doubtful? You either refuse the private duel, or you practise it under laws of honor, not of physical force; that so it may be, in a manner, justly concluded. Now the just or unjust conclusion of the private feud is of little moment, while the just or unjust conclusion of the public feud is of eternal moment: and yet, in this public quarrel, you take your servants' sons from their arms to fight for it, and your servants' food from their lips to support it; and the black seals on the parchment of your treaties of peace are the deserted hearth and the fruitless field. There is a ghastly ludicrousness in this, as there is mostly in these wide and universal crimes. Hear the statement of the very fact of

¹ **Battersea Fields**: formerly, one of the dreariest spots in the suburbs of London. Duels were occasionally fought there. It is now one of the most beautiful parks (Battersea Park) of the metropolis.

it in the most literal words of the greatest of our English thinkers:—

“What, speaking in quite unofficial language, is the net-purport and upshot of war? To my own knowledge, for example, there dwell and toil, in the British village of Dumdrudge, usually some five hundred souls. From these, by certain ‘natural enemies’ of the French, there are successively selected, during the French war, say thirty able-bodied men. Dumdrudge, at her own expense, has suckled and nursed them; she has, not without difficulty and sorrow, fed them up to manhood, and even trained them to crafts, so that one can weave, another build, another hammer, and the weakest can stand under thirty stone¹ avoirdupois. Nevertheless, amid much weeping and swearing, they are selected, all dressed in red, and shipped away, at the public charges, some two thousand miles, or say only to the south of Spain, and fed there till wanted.

“And now to that same spot in the south of Spain are thirty similar French artisans, from a French Dumdrudge, in like manner wending; till at length, after infinite effort, the two parties come into actual juxtaposition; and Thirty stands fronting Thirty, each with a gun in his hand.

“Straightway the word ‘Fire!’ is given, and they blow the souls out of one another, and in place of sixty brisk, useful craftsmen, the world has sixty dead carcasses, which it must bury, and anon² shed tears for. Had these men any quarrel? Busy as the devil is, not the smallest! They lived far enough apart; were the entirest strangers; nay, in so wide a universe, there was even, unconsciously, by commerce, some mutual helpfulness between them.

¹ Stone: a weight of fourteen pounds.

² Anon: forthwith, presently; also afterward.

How then? Simpleton! their governors had fallen out; and instead of shooting one another, had the cunning to make these poor blockheads shoot.”¹

II. I pass now to our second order of war, the commonest among men, — that undertaken in desire of dominion. And let me ask you to think for a few moments what the real meaning of this desire of dominion is — first in the minds of kings — then in that of nations.

Now, mind you this first, — that I speak either about kings, or masses of men, with a fixed conviction that human nature is a noble and beautiful thing; not a foul nor a base thing. All the sin of men I esteem as their disease, not their nature; as a folly which may be prevented, not a necessity which must be accepted. And my wonder, even when things are at their worst, is always at the height which this human nature can attain. Thinking it high, I find it always a higher thing than I thought it; while those who think it low, find it, and will find it, always lower than they thought it: the fact being, that it is infinite, and capable of infinite height and infinite fall; but the nature of it — and here is the faith which I would have you hold with me — the *nature* of it is in the nobleness, not in the catastrophe.

Take the faith in its utmost terms. When the captain of the “London” shook hands with his mate, saying, “God speed you! I will go down with my passengers,” *that* I believe to be “human nature.” He does not do it from any religious motive — from any hope of reward, or any fear of punishment; he does it because he is a man. But when a mother, living among the fair fields of merry England, gives her two-year-old child to be suffocated under a mattress in her inner room, while the said mother waits and

¹ Carlyle’s “Sartor Resartus.”

talks outside ; *that* I believe to be *not* human nature. You have the two extremes there, shortly. And you, men, and mothers, who are here face to face with me to-night, I call upon you to say which of these is human and which inhuman—which “natural” and which “unnatural” ? Choose your creed at once, I beseech you—choose it with unshaken choice—choose it for ever. Will you take, for foundation of act and hope, the faith that this man was such as God made him, or that this woman was such as God made her ? Which of them has failed from their nature—from their present, possible, actual nature ;—not their nature of long ago, but their nature of now ? Which has betrayed it—falsified it ? Did the guardian who died in his trust, die inhumanly, and as a fool ; and did the murderess of her child fulfil the law of her being ? Choose, I say ; infinitude of choices hang upon this. You have had false prophets among you—for centuries you have had them—solemnly warned against them though you were ; false prophets, who have told you that all men are nothing but fiends, or wolves, half beast, half devil. Believe that, and indeed you may sink to that. But refuse that, and have faith that God “made you upright,” though *you* have sought out many inventions ; so, you will strive daily to become more what your Maker meant and means you to be, and daily gives you also the power to be—and you will cling more and more to the nobleness and virtue that is in you, saying, “My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go.”¹

I have put this to you as a choice, as if you might hold either of these creeds you liked best. But there is in reality no choice for you ; the facts being quite easily ascertainable.

¹ Job xxvii. 6.

You have no business to *think* about this matter, or to choose in it. The broad fact is, that a human creature of the highest race, and most perfect as a human thing, is invariably both kind and true ; and that as you lower the race, you get cruelty and falseness, as you get deformity : and this so steadily and assuredly, that the two great words which, in their first use, meant only perfection of race, have come, by consequence of the invariable connection of virtue with the fine human nature, both to signify benevolence of disposition. The word generous, and the word gentle, both, in their origin, meant only "of pure race," but because charity and tenderness are inseparable from this purity of blood, the words which once stood only for pride, now stand as synonyms for virtue.

Now, this being the true power of our inherent humanity, and seeing that all the aim of education should be to develop this,—and seeing, also, what magnificent self-sacrifice the higher classes of men are capable of, for any cause that they understand or feel,—it is wholly inconceivable to me how well-educated princes, who ought to be of all gentlemen the gentlest, and of all nobles the most generous, and whose title of royalty means only their function of doing every man "*right*,"—how these, I say, throughout history, should so rarely pronounce themselves on the side of the poor and of justice, but continually maintain themselves and their own interests by oppression of the poor, and by wresting of justice ; and how this should be accepted as so natural, that the word loyalty, which means faithfulness to law, is used as if it were only the duty of a people to be loyal to their king, and not the duty of a king to be infinitely more loyal to his people. How comes it to pass that a captain will die with his passengers, and lean over the gunwale to

give the parting boat its course ; but that a king will not usually die with, much less *for*, his passengers, — thinks it rather incumbent on his passengers, in any number, to die *for him*? Think, I beseech you, of the wonder of this. The sea captain, not captain by divine right, but only by company's appointment ; — not a man of royal descent, but only a plebeian who can steer ; — not with the eyes of the world upon him, but with feeble chance, depending on one poor boat, of his name being ever heard above the wash of the fatal waves ; — not with the cause of a nation resting on his act, but helpless to save so much as a child from among the lost crowd with whom he resolves to be lost, — yet goes down quietly to his grave, rather than break his faith to these few emigrants. But your captain by divine right, — your captain with the hues of a hundred shields of kings upon his breast, — your captain whose every deed, brave or base, will be illuminated or branded for ever before unescapable eyes of men, — your captain whose every thought and act are beneficent, or fatal, from sun-rising to setting, blessing as the sunshine, or shadowing as the night, — this captain, as you find him in history, for the most part thinks only how he may tax his passengers, and sit at most ease in his state cabin !

For observe, if there had been indeed in the hearts of the rulers of great multitudes of men any such conception of work for the good of those under their command, as there is in the good and thoughtful masters of any small company of men, not only wars for the sake of mere increase of power could never take place, but our idea of power itself would be entirely altered. Do you suppose that to think and act even for a million of men, to hear their complaints, watch their weaknesses, restrain their vices, make laws for them,

lead them, day by day, to purer life, is not enough for one man's work? If any of us were absolute lord only of a district of a hundred miles square, and were resolved on doing our utmost for it; making it feed as large a number of people as possible; making every clod productive, and every rock defensive, and every human being happy; should we not have enough on our hands think you? But if the ruler has any other aim than this; if, careless of the result of his interference, he desire only the authority to interfere; and, regardless of what is ill-done or well-done, cares only that it shall be done at his bidding; — if he would rather do two hundred miles' space of mischief, than one hundred miles' space of good, of course he will try to add to his territory; and to add illimitably. But does he add to his power? Do you call it power in a child, if he is allowed to play with the wheels and bands of some vast engine, pleased with their murmur and whirl, till his unwise touch, wandering where it ought not, scatters beam and wheel into ruin? Yet what machine is so vast, so incognisable,¹ as the working of the mind of a nation; what child's touch so wanton, as the word of a selfish king? And yet, how long have we allowed the historian to speak of the extent of the calamity a man causes, as a just ground for his pride; and to extol him as the greatest prince, who is only the centre of the widest error. Follow out this thought by yourselves; and you will find that all power, properly so called, is wise and benevolent. There may be capacity in a drifting fire-ship to destroy a fleet; there may be venom enough in a dead body to infect a nation. But which of you, the most ambitious, would desire a drifting kinghood, robed in consuming fire, or a poison-dipped

¹ *Incognisable*: unknowable.

sceptre whose touch was mortal? There is no true potency, remember, but that of help; no true ambition, but ambition to save.

And then, observe farther, this true power, the power of saving, depends neither on multitude of men, nor on extent of territory. We are continually assuming that nations become strong according to their numbers. They indeed become so, if those numbers can be made of one mind; but how are you sure you can stay them in one mind, and keep them from having north and south minds? Grant them unanimous, how know you they will be unanimous in right? If they are unanimous in wrong, the more they are, essentially the weaker they are. Or, suppose that they can neither be of one mind, nor of two minds, but can only be of *no* mind? Suppose they are a mere helpless mob, tottering into precipitant catastrophe, like a wagon load of stones when the wheel comes off. Dangerous enough for their neighbors, certainly, but not "powerful."

Neither does strength depend on extent of territory, any more than upon number of population. Take up your maps when you go home this evening, put the cluster of British Isles beside the mass of South America; and then consider whether any race of men need care how much ground they stand upon. The strength is in the men, and in their unity and virtue, not in their standing room: a little group of wise hearts is better than a wilderness full of fools; and only that nation gains true territory, which gains itself.

And now for the brief practical outcome of all this. Remember, no government is ultimately strong, but in proportion to its kindness and justice; and that a nation does not strengthen, by merely multiplying and diffusing itself. We have not strengthened as yet, by multiplying into

America. Nay, even when it has not to encounter the separating conditions of emigration, a nation need not boast itself of multiplying on its own ground, if it multiplies only as flies or locusts do, with the god of flies for its god. It multiplies its strength only by increasing as one great family, in perfect fellowship and brotherhood. And lastly, it does not strengthen itself by seizing dominion over races whom it cannot benefit. Austria is not strengthened, but weakened, by her grasp of Lombardy; and whatever apparent increase of majesty and of wealth may have accrued to us from the possession of India, whether these prove to us ultimately power or weakness, depends wholly on the degree in which our influence on the native race shall be benevolent and exalting. But, as it is at their own peril that any race extends their dominion in mere desire of power, so it is at their own still greater peril that they refuse to undertake aggressive war, according to their force, whenever they are assured that their authority would be helpful and protective. Nor need you listen to any sophistical objection of the impossibility of knowing when a people's help is needed, or when not. Make your national conscience clean, and your national eyes will soon be clear. No man who is truly ready to take part in a noble quarrel will ever stand long in doubt by whom, or in what cause, his aid is needed. I hold it my duty to make no political statement of any special bearing in this presence; but I tell you broadly and boldly, that, within these last ten years, we English have, as a knightly nation, lost our spurs:¹ we have fought

¹ **Spurs:** spurs were the special mark or badge of knighthood. When a knight committed a base action and was publicly expelled from his order, his spurs were taken from him; hence to "lose his spurs" was to lose his honor.

where we should not have fought, for gain ; and we have been passive where we should not have been passive, for fear. I tell you that the principle of non-intervention, as now preached among us, is as selfish and cruel as the worst frenzy of conquest, and differs from it only by being not only malignant, but dastardly.

I know, however, that my opinions on this subject differ too widely from those ordinarily held, to be any farther intruded upon you ; and therefore I pass lastly to examine the conditions of the third kind of noble war ; — war waged simply for defence of the country in which we were born, and for the maintenance and execution of her laws, by whomsoever threatened or defied. It is to this duty that I suppose most men entering the army consider themselves in reality to be bound, and I want you now to reflect what the laws of mere defence are ; and what the soldier's duty, as now understood, or supposed to be understood. You have solemnly devoted yourselves to be English soldiers, for the guardianship of England. I want you to feel what this vow of yours indeed means, or is gradually coming to mean. You take it upon you, first, while you are sentimental schoolboys ; you go into your military convent, or barracks, just as a girl goes into her convent while she is a sentimental schoolgirl ; neither of you then know what you are about, though both the good soldiers and good nuns make the best of it afterwards. You don't understand perhaps why I call you "sentimental" schoolboys, when you go into the army ? Because, on the whole, it is love of adventure, of excitement, of fine dress and of the pride of fame, all which are sentimental motives, which chiefly make a boy like going into the Guards better than into a counting-house. You fancy, perhaps, that there is a

severe sense of duty mixed with these peacocky motives? And in the best of you, there is ; but do not think that it is principal. If you cared to do your duty to your country in a prosaic and unsentimental way, depend upon it, there is now truer duty to be done in raising harvests, than in burning them ; more in building houses, than in shelling them — more in winning money by your own work, wherewith to help men, than in taxing other people's work, for money wherewith to slay men ; more duty finally, in honest and unselfish living than in honest and unselfish dying, though that seems to your boys' eyes the bravest. So far then, as for your own honor, and the honor of your families, you choose brave death in a red coat before brave life in a black one, you are sentimental ; and now see what this passionate vow of yours comes to. For a little while you ride, and you hunt tigers or savages, you shoot, and are shot ; you are happy, and proud, always, and honored and wept if you die ; and you are satisfied with your life, and with the end of it ; believing, on the whole, that good rather than harm of it comes to others, and much pleasure to you. But as the sense of duty enters into your forming minds, the vow takes another aspect. You find that you have put yourselves into the hand of your country as a weapon. You have vowed to strike, when she bids you, and to stay scabbarded when she bids you ; all that you need answer for is, that you fail not in her grasp. And there is goodness in this, and greatness, if you can trust the hand and heart of the Britomart who has braced you to her side, and are assured that when she leaves you sheathed in darkness, there is no need for your flash to the sun. But remember, good and noble as this state may be, it is a state of slavery. There are different kinds

of slaves and different masters. 'Some slaves are scourged to their work by whips, others are scourged to it by restlessness or ambition. It does not matter what the whip is; it is none the less a whip, because you have cut thongs for it out of your own souls: the fact, so far, of slavery, is in being driven to your work without thought, at another's bidding. Again, some slaves are bought with money, and others with praise. It matters not what the purchase-money is. The distinguishing sign of slavery is to have a price, and be bought for it. Again, it matters not what kind of work you are set on; some slaves are set to forced diggings, others to forced marches; some dig furrows, others field-works, and others graves. Some, press the juice of reeds, and some the juice of vines, and some the blood of men. The fact of the captivity is the same whatever work we are set upon, though the fruits of the toil may be different. But, remember, in thus vowing ourselves to be the slaves of any master, it ought to be some subject of forethought with us, what work he is likely to put us upon. You may think that the whole duty of a soldier is to be passive, that it is the country you have left behind who is to command, and you have only to obey. But are you sure that you have left *all* your country behind, or that the part of it you have so left is indeed the best part of it? Suppose—and, remember, it is quite conceivable—that you yourselves are indeed the best part of England; that you, who have become the slaves, ought to have been the masters; and that those who are the masters, ought to have been the slaves! If it is a noble and whole-hearted England, whose bidding you are bound to do, it is well; but if you are yourselves the best of her heart, and the England you have left be but

a half-hearted England, how say you of your obedience? You were too proud to become shopkeepers: are you satisfied then to become the servants of shopkeepers? You were too proud to become merchants or farmers yourselves: will you have merchants or farmers then for your field-m Marshals? You had no gifts of special grace for Exeter Hall¹: will you have some gifted person thereat for your commander-in-chief, to judge of your work, and reward it? You imagine yourselves to be the army of England: how if you should find yourselves, at last, only the police of her manufacturing towns, and the beadles² of her little Bethels³?

It is not so yet, nor will be so, I trust, for ever; but what I want you to see, and to be assured of, is, that the ideal of soldiership is not mere passive obedience and bravery; that, so far from this, no country is in a healthy state which has separated, even in a small degree, her civil from her military power. All states of the world, however great, fall at once when they use mercenary armies; and although it is a less instant form of error (because involving no national taint of cowardice), it is yet an error no less ultimately fatal—it is the error especially of modern times, of which we cannot yet know all the calamitous consequences—to take away the best blood and strength of the nation, all the soul-substance of it that is brave, and careless of reward, and scornful of pain, and faithful in trust; and to cast that into steel, and make a mere sword of it; taking away its voice and will;

¹ **Exeter Hall**: a large hall in London where many religious and charitable societies hold their anniversary meetings; the name is sometimes used satirically as a synonym for fanaticism and hypocrisy.

² **Beadles**: petty parish or church officers.

³ **Bethels**: cheap chapels for congregations of small means.

but to keep the worst part of the nation—whatever is cowardly, avaricious, sensual, and faithless—and to give to this the voice, to this the authority, to this the chief privilege, where there is least capacity, of thought. The fulfilment of your vow for the defence of England will by no means consist in carrying out such a system. A soldier's vow to his country is that he will die for the guardianship of her domestic virtue, of her righteous laws, and of her anyway challenged or endangered honor. A state without virtue, without laws, and without honor, he is bound *not* to defend; nay, bound to redress by his own right hand that which he sees to be base in her. So sternly is this the law of Nature and life, that a nation once utterly corrupt can only be redeemed by a military despotism—never by talking, nor by its free effort. And the health of any state consists simply in this: that in it, those who are wisest shall also be strongest; its rulers should be also its soldiers; or, rather, by force of intellect more than of sword, its soldiers its rulers. Whatever the hold which the aristocracy of England has on the heart of England, in that they are still always in front of her battles, this hold will not be enough, unless they are also in front of her thoughts.

And now, remember, you soldier youths, that your fitness for all future trust depends upon what you are now. No good soldier in his old age was ever careless or indolent in his youth. Many a giddy and thoughtless boy has become a good bishop, or a good lawyer, or a good merchant; but no such an one ever became a good general. I challenge you, in all history, to find a record of a good soldier who was not grave and earnest in his youth. And, in general, I have no patience with people who talk about

'the thoughtlessness of youth' indulgently. I had infinitely rather hear of thoughtless old age, and the indulgence due to *that*. When a man has done his work, and nothing can any way be materially altered in his fate, let him forget his toil, and jest with his fate, if he will; but what excuse can you find for wilfulness of thought, at the very time when every crisis of future fortune hangs on your decisions? A youth thoughtless! when all the happiness of his home for ever depends on the chances, or the passions, of an hour? A youth thoughtless! when the career of all his days depends on the opportunity of a moment! A youth thoughtless! when his every act is a foundation-stone of future conduct, and every imagination a fountain of life or death! Be thoughtless in *any* after years, rather than now—though, indeed, there is only one place where a man may be nobly thoughtless,—his deathbed. No thinking should ever be left to be done there.

Having, then, resolved that you will not waste recklessly, but earnestly use, these early days of yours, remember that all the duties of her children to England may be summed in two words—industry and honor. I say first, industry, for it is in this that soldier youth are especially tempted to fail. Yet, surely, there is no reason, because your life may possibly or probably be shorter than other men's, that you should therefore waste more recklessly the portion of it that is granted you; neither do the duties of your profession, which require you to keep your bodies strong, in any way involve the keeping of your minds weak. So far from that, the experience, the hardship, and the activity of a soldier's life render his powers of thought more accurate than those of other men; and while, for others, all knowledge is often little more than a

means of amusement, there is no form of science which a soldier may not at some time or other find bearing on business of life and death. A young mathematician may be excused for languor in studying curves to be described only with a pencil ; but not in tracing those which are to be described with a rocket. Your knowledge of a wholesome herb may involve the feeding of an army ; and acquaintance with an obscure point of geography, the success of a campaign. Never waste an instant's time, therefore ; the sin of idleness is a thousand-fold greater in you than in other youths ; for the fates of those who will one day be under your command hang upon your knowledge ; lost moments now will be lost lives then, and every instant which you carelessly take for play, you buy with blood. But there is one way of wasting time, of all the vilest, because it wastes, not time only, but the interest and energy of your minds. Of all the ungentlemanly habits into which you can fall, the vilest is betting, or interesting yourselves in the issues of betting. It unites nearly every condition of folly and vice ; you concentrate your interest upon a matter of chance, instead of upon a subject of true knowledge ; and you back opinions which you have no grounds for forming, merely because they are your own. All the insolence of egotism is in this ; and so far as the love of excitement is complicated with the hope of winning money, you turn yourselves into the basest sort of tradesmen — those who live by speculation. Were there no other ground for industry, this would be a sufficient one ; that it protected you from the temptation to so scandalous a vice. Work faithfully, and you will put yourselves in possession of a glorious and enlarging hap-

piness ; not such as can be won by the speed of a horse, or marred by the obliquity of a ball.

First, then, by industry you must fulfil your vow to your country ; but all industry and earnestness will be useless unless they are consecrated by your resolution to be in all things men of honor ; not honor in the common sense only, but in the highest. Rest on the force of the two main words in the great verse, *integer vitæ, scelerisque purus*.¹ You have vowed your life to England ; give it to her wholly — a bright, stainless, perfect life — a knightly life. Because you have to fight with machines instead of lances, there may be a necessity for more ghastly danger, but there is none for less worthiness of character, than in olden time. You may be true knights yet, though perhaps not *equites*,² you may have to call yourselves ‘cannonry’ instead of ‘chivalry,’ but that is no reason why you should not call yourselves true men. So the first thing you have to see to in becoming soldiers is that you make yourselves wholly true. Courage is a mere matter of course among any ordinarily well-born youths ; but neither truth nor gentleness is matter of course. You must bind them like shields about your necks ; you must write them on the tables of your hearts. Though it be not exacted of you, yet exact it of yourselves, this vow of stainless truth. Your hearts are, if you leave them unstirred, as tombs in which a god lies buried. Vow yourselves crusaders to redeem that sacred sepulchre. And remember, before all things — for no other memory will be so protective of you

¹ *Integer vitæ*, etc. : “The man whose life has no flaw, pure from guile.” Horace, Odes, I. 22.

² *Equites* : originally an honorable body of Roman cavalry.

— that the highest law of this knightly truth is that under which it is vowed to women. Whomsoever else you deceive, whomsoever you injure, whomsoever you leave unaided, you must not deceive, nor injure, nor leave unaided, according to your power, any woman of whatever rank. Believe me, every virtue of the higher phases of manly character begins in this;—in truth and modesty before the face of all maidens; in truth and pity, or truth and reverence, to all womanhood.

And now let me turn for a moment to you,—wives and maidens, who are the souls of soldiers; to you—mothers, who have devoted your children to the great hierarchy¹ of war. Let me ask you to consider what part you have to take for the aid of those who love you; for if you fail in your part, they cannot fulfil theirs; such absolute help-mates you are that no man can stand without that help, nor labor in his own strength.

I know your hearts, and that the truth of them never fails when an hour of trial comes which you recognize for such. But you know not when the hour of trial first finds you, nor when it verily finds you. You imagine that you are only called upon to wait and to suffer; to surrender and to mourn. You know that you must not weaken the hearts of your husbands and lovers, even by the one fear of which those hearts are capable,—the fear of parting from you, or of causing you grief. Through weary years of separation; through fearful expectancies of unknown fate; through the tenfold bitterness of the sorrow which might so easily have been joy, and the tenfold yearning for glorious life struck down in its prime—through all

¹ **Hierarchy**: here, a graded rank or order.

these agonies you fail not, and never will fail. But your trial is not in these. To be heroic in danger is little ;— you are Englishwomen. To be heroic in change and sway of fortune is little ;— for do you not love ? To be patient through the great chasm and pause of loss is little ;— for do you not still love in heaven ? But to be heroic in happiness ; to bear yourselves gravely and righteously in the dazzling of the sunshine of morning ; not to forget the God in whom you trust, when He gives you most ; not to fail those who trust you, when they seem to need you least ; this is the difficult fortitude. It is not in the pining of absence, not in the peril of battle, not in the wasting of sickness, that your prayer should be most passionate, or your guardianship most tender. Pray, mothers and maidens, for your young soldiers in the bloom of their pride ; pray for them, while the only dangers round them are in their own wayward wills ; watch you, and pray, when they have to face, not death, but temptation. But it is this fortitude also for which there is the crowning reward. Believe me, the whole course and character of your lovers' lives is in your hands ; what you would have them be, they shall be, if you not only desire to have them so, but deserve to have them so ; for they are but mirrors in which you will see yourselves imaged. If you are frivolous, they will be so also ; if you have no understanding of the scope of their duty, they also will forget it ; they will listen, — they *can* listen, — to no other interpretation of it than that uttered from your lips. Bid them to be brave ; — they will be brave for you ; bid them to be cowards ; and how noble soever they be ; — they will quail for you. Bid them be wise, and they will be wise for you ; mock at their

counsel, they will be fools for you: such and so absolute is your rule over them. You fancy, perhaps, as you have been told so often, that a wife's rule should only be over her husband's house, not over his mind. Ah, no! the true rule is just the reverse of that; a true wife, in her husband's house, is his servant; it is in his heart that she is queen. Whatever of the best he can conceive, it is her part to be; whatever of highest he can hope, it is hers to promise; all that is dark in him she must purge into purity; all that is failing in him she must strengthen into truth; from her, through all the world's clamor, he must win his praise; in her, through all the world's warfare, he must find his peace.

And, now, but one word more. You may wonder, perhaps, that I have spoken all this night in praise of war. Yet, truly, if it might be, I, for one, would fain join in the cadence of hammer-strokes that should beat swords into ploughshares: and that this cannot be, is not the fault of us men. It is *your* fault. Wholly yours. Only by your command, or by your permission, can any contest take place among us. And the real, final, reason for all the poverty, misery, and rage of battle, throughout Europe, is simply that you women, however good, however religious, however self-sacrificing for those whom you love, are too selfish and too thoughtless to take pains for any creature out of your own immediate circles. You fancy that you are sorry for the pain of others. Now I just tell you this, that if the usual course of war, instead of unroofing peasants' houses and ravaging peasants' fields, merely broke the china upon your own drawing-room tables, no war in civilized countries would last a week. I tell you more,

that at whatever moment you choose to put a period to war, you could do it with less trouble than you take any day to go out to dinner. You know, or at least you might know if you would think, that every battle you hear of has made many widows and orphans. We have, none of us, heart enough truly to mourn with these. But at least we might put on the outer symbols of mourning with them. Let but every Christian lady who has conscience toward God, vow that she will mourn, at least outwardly, for His killed creatures. Your praying is useless, and your churchgoing mere mockery of God, if you have not plain obedience in you enough for this. Let every lady in the upper classes of civilized Europe simply vow that, while any cruel war proceeds, she will wear *black*; — a mute's¹ black, — with no jewel, no ornament, no excuse for, or evasion into, prettiness. I tell you again, no war would last a week.

And lastly. You women of England are all now shrieking with one voice, — you and your clergymen together, — because you hear of your Bibles being attacked. If you choose to obey your Bibles, you will never care who attacks them, It is just because you never fulfil a single downright precept of the Book, that you are so careful for its credit: and just because you don't care to obey its whole words, that you are so particular about the letters of them. The Bible tells you to dress plainly, — and you are mad for finery; the Bible tells you to have pity on the poor, — and you crush them under your carriage-wheels; the Bible tells you to do judgment and justice, — and you

¹ Mute: here, a person hired by an undertaker to stand at the door of a house in which there is a corpse.

do not know, nor care to know, so much as what the Bible word 'justice' means. Do but learn so much of God's truth as that comes to; know what He means when He tells you to be just: and teach your sons, that their bravery is but a fool's boast, and their deeds but a firebrand's tossing, unless they are indeed Just men, and Perfect in the Fear of God; and you will soon have no more war, unless it be indeed such as is willed by Him, of whom, though Prince of Peace, it is also written, 'In Righteousness He doth judge, and make war.'¹

¹ Rev. xix. 2.

WORK.*

MY FRIENDS, — I have not come among you to-night to endeavor to give you an entertaining lecture; but to tell you a few plain facts, and ask you some plain, but necessary questions. I have seen and known too much of the struggle for life among our laboring population, to feel at ease, even under any circumstances, in inviting them to dwell on the trivialities of my own studies; but, much more, as I meet to-night, for the first time, the members of a working Institute established in the district in which I have passed the greater part of my life,¹ I am desirous that we should at once understand each other, on graver matters. I would fain tell you, with what feelings, and with what hope, I regard this Institution, as one of many such, now happily established throughout England, as well as in other countries; — Institutions which are preparing the way for a great change in all the circumstances of industrial life; but of which the success must wholly depend upon our clearly understanding the circumstances and necessary *limits* of this change. No teacher can truly promote the cause of education, until he knows the conditions of the life for which

* A Lecture delivered before the Working Men's Institute, at Camberwell. See "The Crown of Wild Olive."

¹ Camberwell is a district in southern London. It includes the suburb where Ruskin spent much of his childhood and where he afterward lived.

that education is to prepare his pupil. And the fact that he is called upon to address you, nominally, as a 'Working Class,' must compel him, if he is in any wise earnest or thoughtful, to inquire in the outset, on what you yourselves suppose this class distinction has been founded in the past, and must be founded in the future. The manner of the amusement, and the matter of the teaching, which any of us can offer you, must depend wholly on our first understanding from you, whether you think the distinction heretofore drawn between working men and others, is truly or falsely founded. Do you accept it as it stands? do you wish it to be modified? or do you think the object of education is to efface it, and make us forget it for ever?

Let me make myself more distinctly understood. We call this—you and I—a 'Working Men's' Institute, and our college in London, a 'Working Men's' College. Now, how do you consider that these several institutes differ, or ought to differ, from 'idle men's' institutes and 'idle men's' colleges? Or by what other word than 'idle' shall I distinguish those whom the happiest and wisest of working men do not object to call the 'Upper Classes'? Are there really upper classes,—are there lower? How much should they always be elevated, how much always depressed? And, gentlemen and ladies—I pray those of you who are here to forgive me the offence there may be in what I am going to say. It is not *I* who wish to say it. Bitter voices say it; voices of battle and of famine through all the world, which must be heard some day; whoever keeps silence. Neither is it to *you* specially that I say it. I am sure that most now present know their duties of kindness, and fulfil them, better perhaps than I do mine. But I speak to you as representing your whole class, which

errs, I know, chiefly by thoughtlessness, but not therefore the less terribly. Wilful error is limited by the will, but what limit is there to that of which we are unconscious?

Bear with me, therefore, while I turn to these workmen, and ask them, also as representing a great multitude, what they think the 'upper classes' are, and ought to be, in relation to them. Answer, you workmen who are here, as you would among yourselves, frankly; and tell me how you would have me call those classes. Am I to call them—would *you* think me right in calling them—the idle classes? I think you would feel somewhat uneasy, and as if I were not treating my subject honestly, or speaking from my heart, if I went on under the supposition that all rich people were idle. You would be both unjust and unwise if you allowed me to say that; not less unjust than the rich people who say that all the poor are idle, and will never work if they can help it, or more than they can help.

For indeed the fact is, that there are idle poor and idle rich; and there are busy poor and busy rich. Many a beggar is as lazy as if he had ten thousand a year; and many a man of large fortune is busier than his errand-boy, and never would think of stopping in the street to play marbles. So that, in a large view, the distinction between workers and idlers, as between knaves and honest men, runs through the very heart and innermost economies of men of all ranks and in all positions. There is a working class—strong and happy—among both rich and poor; there is an idle class—weak, wicked, and miserable—among both rich and poor. And the worst of the misunderstandings arising between the two orders come of the unlucky fact that the wise of one class habitually contemplate the foolish of the other. If the busy rich people

watched and rebuked the idle rich people, all would be right; and if the busy poor people watched and rebuked the idle poor people, all would be right. But each class has a tendency to look for the faults of the other. A hard-working man of property is particularly offended by an idle beggar; and an orderly, but poor, workman is naturally intolerant of the licentious luxury of the rich. And what is severe judgment in the minds of the just men of either class, becomes fierce enmity in the unjust—but among the unjust *only*. None but the dissolute among the poor look upon the rich as their natural enemies, or desire to pillage their houses and divide their property. None but the dissolute among the rich speak in opprobrious terms of the vices and follies of the poor.

There is, then, no class distinction between idle and industrious people; and I am going to-night to speak only of the industrious. The idle people we will put out of our thoughts at once—they are mere nuisances—what ought to be done with *them*, we'll talk of at another time. But there are class distinctions among the industrious themselves;—tremendous distinctions, which rise and fall to every degree in the infinite thermometer of human pain and of human power—distinctions of high and low, of lost and won, to the whole reach of man's soul and body.

These separations we will study, and the laws of them, among energetic men only, who, whether they work or whether they play, put their strength into the work, and their strength into the game; being, in the full sense of the word, 'industrious,' one way or another—with a purpose, or without. And these distinctions are mainly four:

I. Between those who work, and those who play.

II. Between those who produce the means of life, and those who consume them.

III. Between those who work with the head, and those who work with the hand.

IV. Between those who work wisely, and who work foolishly.

For easier memory, let us say we are going to oppose, in our examination, —

- I. Work to play;
- II. Production to consumption;
- III. Head to hand; and,
- IV. Sense to nonsense.

I. First, then, of the distinction between the classes who work and the classes who play. Of course we must agree upon a definition of these terms, — work and play, — before going farther. Now, roughly, not with vain subtlety of definition, but for plain use of the words, ‘play’ is an exertion of body or mind, made to please ourselves, and with no determined end; and work is a thing done because it ought to be done, and with a determined end. You play, as you call it, at cricket, for instance. That is as hard work as anything else; but it amuses you, and it has no result but the amusement. If it were done as an ordered form of exercise, for health’s sake, it would become work directly. So, in like manner, whatever we do to please ourselves, and only for the sake of the pleasure, not for an ultimate object, is ‘play,’ the ‘pleasing thing,’ not the useful thing. Play may be useful in a secondary sense (nothing is indeed more useful or necessary); but the use of it depends on its being spontaneous.

Let us, then, inquire together what sort of games the playing class in England spend their lives in playing at.

The first of all English games is making money. That

is an all-absorbing game ; and we knock each other down oftener in playing at that than at foot-ball, or any other roughest sport ; and it is absolutely without purpose ; no one who engages heartily in that game ever knows why. Ask a great money-maker what he wants to do with his money — he never knows. He doesn't make it to do anything with it. He gets it only that he *may* get it. 'What will you make of what you have got ?' you ask. 'Well, I'll get more,' he says. Just as, at cricket, you get more runs. There's no use in the runs, but to get more of them than other people is the game. And there's no use in the money, but to have more of it than other people is the game.

Well, this is the first great English game. It differs from the rest in that it appears always to be producing money, while the other game is expensive. But it does not always produce money. There's a great difference between 'winning' money and 'making' it ; a great difference between getting it out of another man's pocket into ours, or filling both. Collecting money is by no means the same thing as making it ; the tax-gatherer's house is not the Mint ; and much of the apparent gain (so called), in commerce, is only a form of taxation on carriage or exchange.

Our next great English game, however, hunting and shooting, is costly altogether ; and how much we are fined for it annually in land, horses, gamekeepers and game laws, and all else that accompanies that beautiful and special English game, I will not endeavor to count now : but note only that, except for exercise, this is not merely a useless game, but a deadly one, to all connected with it. For through horse-racing, you get every form of what the higher classes everywhere call 'Play,' in distinction from all other

plays; that is—gambling; by no means a beneficial or recreative game: and, through game-preserving,¹ you get also some curious laying out of ground; that beautiful arrangement of dwelling-house for man and beast, by which we have grouse and blackcock—so many brace to the acre, and men and women—so many brace to the garret. I often wonder what the angelic builders and surveyors—the angelic builders who build the ‘many mansions’ up above there; and the angelic surveyors, who measured that four-square city with their measuring reeds²—I wonder what they think, or are supposed to think, of the laying out of ground by this nation, which has set itself, as it seems, literally to accomplish, word for word, or rather fact for word, in the persons of those poor whom its Master left to represent him, what that Master said of himself—that foxes and birds had homes, but He none.

Then, next to the gentlemen’s game of hunting, we must put the ladies’ game of dressing. It is not the cheapest of games. I saw a brooch at a jeweller’s in Bond Street³ a fortnight ago, not an inch wide, and without any singular jewel in it, yet worth 3000/.⁴ And I wish I could tell you what this ‘play’ costs, altogether, in England, France, and Russia annually. But it is a pretty game, and on certain terms, I like it; nay, I don’t see it played quite as much as I would fain have it. You ladies like to lead the fashion:—by all means lead it—lead it thoroughly, lead it far

¹ **Game-preserving:** a large extent of land in England is held by the great land-owners for hunting purposes, and is stocked with game under the care of keepers.

² Revelation xxi. 15.

³ **Bond Street:** a fashionable shopping street at the West End of London.

⁴ 3000/: three thousand pounds, or \$15,000.

enough. Dress yourselves nicely, and dress everybody else nicely. Lead the *fashions for the poor* first; make *them* look well, and you yourselves will look, in ways of which you have now no conception, all the better. The fashions you have set for some time among your peasantry are not pretty ones; their doublets¹ are too irregularly slashed, and the wind blows too frankly through them.

Then there are other games, wild enough, as I could show you if I had time.

There's playing at literature, and playing at art — very different, both, from working at literature, or working at art, but I've no time to speak of these. I pass to the greatest of all — the play of plays, the great gentlemen's game, which ladies like them best to play at, — the game of War. It is entrancingly pleasant to the imagination; the facts of it, not always so pleasant. We dress for it, however, more finely than for any other sport; and go out to it, not merely in scarlet, as to hunt, but in scarlet and gold and all manner of fine colors: of course we could fight better in gray, and without feathers; but all nations have agreed that it is good to be well dressed at this play. Then the bats and balls are very costly; our English and French bats, with the balls and wickets, even those which we don't make any use of, costing, I suppose, now about fifteen millions² of money annually to each nation; all of which you know is paid for by hard laborer's work in the furrow and furnace. A costly game! — not to speak of its

¹ **Doublets**: jacket-like garments once worn in England. They were frequently made of rich stuffs, and slashed on the sleeves to show the colored silk lining. Here, of course, the slashing alluded to is that of rags and tatters.

² **Fifteen millions** (of pounds): \$75,000,000.

consequences ; I will say at present nothing of these. The mere immediate cost of all these plays is what I want you to consider ; they all cost deadly work somewhere, as many of us know too well. The jewel-cutter, whose sight fails over the diamonds ; the weaver, whose arm fails over the web ; the iron-forging, whose breath fails before the furnace — *they* know what work is — they, who have all the work, and none of the play, except a kind they have named for themselves down in the black north country,¹ where ‘play’ means being laid up by sickness. It is a pretty example for philologists,² of varying dialect, this change in the sense of the word ‘play,’ as used in the black country of Birmingham, and the red and black country of Baden Baden.³ Yes, gentlemen, and gentlewomen, of England, who think ‘one moment unamused a misery, not made for feeble man,’ this is what you have brought the word ‘play’ to mean, in the heart of merry England ! You may have your fluting and piping ;⁴ but there are sad children sitting in the market-place, who indeed cannot say to you, ‘We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced :’ but eternally shall say to you, ‘We have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.’⁵

II. Next, notice that there is a distinction between rich and poor which rests on two bases. Within its proper

¹ **Black north country**: the iron manufacturing district in central England, of which Birmingham is the chief town. It gets its name from the coal smoke which fills the air, and begrimes the surface of the soil and the buildings.

² **Philologists**: those who are versed in the study of language.

³ **Baden Baden** (Bah’den Bah’den): a town of Germany, once famous for its licensed gambling-houses. A favorite game of cards there, called Rouge et Noir (Red and Black), was played on tables marked with red and black spots.

⁴ **Piping**: playing on a pipe or fife.

⁵ Matthew xi. 17.

limits, on a basis which is lawful and everlastingly necessary ; beyond them, on a basis unlawful, and everlastingly corrupting the frame-work of society. The law basis of wealth is, that a man who works should be paid the fair value of his work ; and that if he does not choose to spend it to-day, he should have free leave to keep it, and spend it to-morrow. Thus, an industrious man working daily, and laying by daily, attains at last the possession of an accumulated sum of wealth, to which he has absolute right. The idle person who will not work, and the wasteful person who lays nothing by, at the end of the same time will be doubly poor — poor in possession, and dissolute in moral habit ; and he will then naturally covet the money which the other has saved. And if he is then allowed to attack the other, and rob him of his well-earned wealth, there is no more any motive for saving, or any reward for good conduct ; and all society is thereupon dissolved, or exists only in systems of rapine. Therefore the first necessity of social life is the clearness of national conscience in enforcing the law — that he should keep who has JUSTLY EARNED.

That law, I say, is the proper basis of distinction between rich and poor. But there is also a false basis of distinction ; namely, the power held over those who earn wealth by those who levy or exact it. There will be always a number of men who would fain set themselves to the accumulation of wealth as the sole object of their lives. Necessarily, that class of men is an uneducated class, inferior in intellect, and more or less cowardly. It is physically impossible for a well-educated, intellectual, or brave man to make money the chief object of his thoughts ; as physically impossible as it is for him to make his dinner the principal object of them. All healthy people like their dinners, but

their dinner is not the main object of their lives. So all healthily minded people like making money — ought to like it, and to enjoy the sensation of winning it ; but the main object of their life is not money ; it is something better than money. A good soldier, for instance, mainly wishes to do his fighting well. He is glad of his pay — very properly so, and justly grumbles when you keep him ten years without it — still, his main notion of life is to win battles, not to be paid for winning them. So of clergymen. They like pew-rents, and baptismal fees, of course ; but yet, if they are brave and well educated, the pew-rent is not the sole object of their lives, and the baptismal fee is not the sole purpose of the baptism ; the clergyman's object is essentially to baptize and preach, not to be paid for preaching. So of doctors. They like fees no doubt, — ought to like them ; yet if they are brave and well educated, the entire object of their lives is not fees. They, on the whole, desire to cure the sick ; and, — if they are good doctors, and the choice were fairly put to them, — would rather cure their patient, and lose their fee, than kill him, and get it. And so with all other brave and rightly trained men ; their work is first, their fee second — very important always, but still *second*. But in every nation, as I said, there are a vast class who are ill-educated, cowardly, and more or less stupid. And with these people, just as certainly the fee is first, and the work second, as with brave people the work is first and the fee second. And this is no small distinction. It is the whole distinction in a man ; distinction between life and death *in* him, between heaven and hell *for* him. You cannot serve two masters ; — you *must* serve one or other. If your work is first with you, and your fee second, work is your master, and the lord of work, who is God.

But if your fee is first with you, and your work second, fee is your master, and the lord of fee, who is the Devil; and not only the Devil, but the lowest of devils — the 'least erected fiend that fell.'¹ So there you have it in brief terms; Work first — you are God's servants; Fee first — you are the Fiend's. And it makes a difference, now and ever, believe me, whether you serve Him who has on His vesture and thigh written, 'King of Kings,'² and whose service is perfect freedom; or him on whose vesture and thigh the name is written, 'Slave of Slaves,' and whose service is perfect slavery.

However, in every nation there are, and must always be a certain number of these Fiend's servants, who have it principally for the object of their lives to make money. They are always, as I said, more or less stupid, and can not conceive of anything else so nice as money. Stupidity is always the basis of the Judas bargain. We do great injustice to Iscariot, in thinking him wicked above all common wickedness. He was only a common money-lover, and, like all money-lovers, didn't understand Christ; — couldn't make out the worth of Him, or meaning of Him. He didn't want Him to be killed. He was horror-struck when he found that Christ would be killed; threw his money away instantly, and hanged himself. How many of our present money-seekers, think you, would have the grace

¹ "Mammon, the least erected spirit that fell
From heaven; for e'en in heaven his looks and thoughts
Were always downward bent, admiring more
The riches of heaven's pavement, trodden gold,
Than aught divine or holy else enjoyed
In vision beatific." — *Milton's Paradise Lost*, Book I. Line 679.

² Revelation xix. 16.

to hang themselves, whoever was killed? But Judas was a common, selfish, muddle-headed, pilfering fellow; his hand always in the bag¹ of the poor, not caring for them. He didn't understand Christ; yet believed in Him, much more than most of us do; had seen Him do miracles, thought He was quite strong enough to shift for Himself, and he, Judas, might as well make his own little bye-perquisites² out of the affair. Christ would come out of it well enough, and he have his thirty pieces. Now, that is the money-seeker's idea, all over the world. He doesn't hate Christ, but can't understand Him — doesn't care for Him — sees no good in that benevolent business; makes his own little job out of it at all events, come what will. And thus, out of every mass of men, you have a certain number of bag-men — your 'fee-first' men, whose main object is to make money. And they do make it — make it in all sorts of unfair ways, chiefly by the weight and force of money itself, or what is called the power of capital; that is to say, the power which money, once obtained, has over the labor of the poor, so that the capitalist can take all its produce to himself, except the laborer's food. That is the modern Judas's way of 'carrying the bag,' and 'bearing what is put therein.'

Nay, but (it is asked) how is that an unfair advantage? Has not the man who has worked for the money a right to use it as he best can? No; in this respect, money is now exactly what mountain promontories over public roads were

¹ **The bag**: the purse or money-box. "This he [Judas Iscariot] said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein." — *John* xii. 6, and compare xiii. 29.

² **Bye-perquisites**: something gained in an irregular way over and above one's fixed wages.

in old times. The barons fought for them fairly:—the strongest and cunningest got them; then fortified them, and made everyone who passed below pay toll. Well, capital now is exactly what crags were then. Men fight fairly (we will, at least, grant so much, though it is more than we ought) for their money; but, once having got it, the fortified millionaire can make everybody who passes below pay toll to his million, and build another tower of his money castle. And I can tell you, the poor vagrants by the roadside suffer now quite as much from the bag-baron, as ever they did from the crag-baron. Bags and crags have just the same result on rags. I have not time, however, to-night to show you in how many ways the power of capital is unjust; but this one great principle I have to assert—you will find it quite indisputably true that whenever money is the principal object of life with either man or nation, it is both got ill, and spent ill; and does harm both in the getting and spending; but when it is not the principal object, it and all other things will be well got, and well spent. And here is the test, with every man, of whether money is the principal object with him, or not. If in mid-life he could pause and say, "Now I have enough to live upon, I'll live upon it; and having well earned it, I will also well spend it, and go out of the world poor, as I came into it," then money is not principal with him; but if, having enough to live upon in the manner befitting his character and rank, he still wants to make more, and to *die* rich, then money is the principal object with him, and it becomes a curse to himself, and generally to those who spend it after him. For you know it *must* be spent some day; the only question is whether the man who makes it shall spend it, or some one else. And generally it is better

for the maker to spend it, for he will know best its value and use. This is the true law of life. And if a man does not choose thus to spend his money, he must either hoard it or lend it, and the worst thing he can generally do is to lend it: for borrowers are nearly always ill-spenders, and it is with lent money that all evil is mainly done, and all unjust war protracted.

For observe what the real fact is, respecting loans to foreign military governments, and how strange it is. If your little boy came to you to ask for money to spend in squibs and crackers, you would think twice before you gave it him and you would have some idea that it was wasted, when you saw it fly off in fireworks, even though he did no mischief with it. But the Russian children, and Austrian children, come to you, borrowing money, not to spend in innocent squibs, but in cartridges and bayonets to attack you in India with, and to keep down all noble life in Italy with, and to murder Polish women and children with; and *that* you will give at once, because they pay you interest for it. Now, in order to pay you that interest, they must tax every working peasant in their dominions; and on that work you live. You therefore at once rob the Austrian peasant, assassinate or banish the Polish peasant, and you live on the produce of the theft, and the bribe for the assassination! That is the broad fact—that is the practical meaning of your foreign loans, and of most large interest of money; and then you quarrel with Bishop Colenso¹ forsooth, as if *he* denied the Bible, and you believed it! though wretches as you are, every deliber-

¹ **Bishop Colenso**: an English bishop of South Africa (1854), who published several works denying the inspiration and historical accuracy of certain parts of the Old Testament.

ate act of your lives is a new defiance of its primary orders; and as if, for most of the rich men of England at this moment, it were not indeed to be desired, as the best thing at least for *them*, that the Bible should *not* be true, since against them these words are written in it: 'The rust of your gold and silver shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh, as it were fire.'¹

III. I pass now to our third condition of separation, between the men who work with the hand, and those who work with the head.

And here we have at last an inevitable distinction. There *must* be work done by the arms, or none of us could live. There *must* be work done by the brains, or the life we get would not be worth having. And the same men cannot do both. There is rough work to be done, and rough men must do it; there is gentle work to be done, and gentlemen must do it; and it is physically impossible that one class should do, or divide, the work of the other. And it is of no use to try to conceal this sorrowful fact by fine words, and to talk to the workman about the honorableness of manual labor, and the dignity of humanity. That is a grand old proverb of Sancho Panza's,² 'Fine words butter no parsnips;' and I can tell you that, all over England just now, you workmen are buying a great deal too much butter at that dairy. Rough work, honorable or not, takes the life out of us; and the man who has been heaving clay out of a ditch all day, or driving an express train against the north wind all night, or holding a collier's³

¹ James v. 3.

² **Sancho Panza** (San'ko Pan'za): a humorous character in Cervantes' famous Spanish novel "Don Quixote."

³ **Collier**: here, a vessel engaged in the coal trade.

helm in a gale on a lee-shore, or whirling white hot iron at a furnace mouth, that man is not the same at the end of his day, or night, as one who has been sitting in a quiet room, with everything comfortable about him, reading books, or classing butterflies, or painting pictures. If it is any comfort to you to be told that the rough work is the more honorable of the two, I should be sorry to take that much of consolation from you; and in some sense I need not. The rough work is at all events real, honest, and, generally, though not always, useful; while the fine work is, a great deal of it, foolish and false as well as fine, and therefore dishonorable: but when both kinds are equally well and worthily done, the head's is the noble work, and the hand's the ignoble; and of all hand work whatsoever, necessary for the maintenance of life, those old words, 'In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread,'¹ indicate that the inherent nature of it is one of calamity; and that the ground, cursed for our sake, casts also some shadow of degradation into our contest with its thorn and its thistle; so that all nations have held their days honorable, or 'holy,' and constituted them 'holydays' or 'holidays,' by making them days of rest; and the promise, which, among all our distant hopes, seems to cast the chief brightness over death, is that blessing of the dead who die in the Lord, that 'they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.'²

And thus the perpetual question and contest must arise, who is to do this rough work? and how is the worker of it to be comforted, redeemed, and rewarded? and what kind of play should he have, and what rest, in this world, sometimes, as well as in the next? Well, my good working

¹ Genesis iii. 19.

² Revelation xiv. 13.

friends, these questions will take a little time to answer yet. They must be answered: all good men are occupied with them, and all honest thinkers. There's grand head work doing about them; but much must be discovered, and much attempted in vain, before anything decisive can be told you. Only note these few particulars, which are already sure.

As to the distribution of the hard work. None of us, or very few of us, do either hard or soft work because we think we ought; but because we have chanced to fall into the way of it, and cannot help ourselves. Now, nobody does anything well that he cannot help doing: work is only done well when it is done with a will; and no man has a thoroughly sound will unless he knows he is doing what he should, and is in his place. And, depend upon it, all work must be done at last, not in a disorderly, scrambling, dog-gish way, but in an ordered, soldierly, human way—a lawful way. Men are enlisted for the labor that kills—the labor of war: they are counted, trained, fed, dressed, and praised for that. Let them be enlisted also for the labor that feeds: let them be counted, trained, fed, dressed, praised for that. Teach the plough exercise as carefully as you do the sword exercise, and let the officers of troops of life be held as much gentlemen as the officers of troops of death; and all is done: but neither this, nor any other right thing, can be accomplished—you can't even see your way to it—unless, first of all, both servant and master are resolved that, come what will of it, they will do each other justice. People are perpetually squabbling about what will be best to do, or easiest to do, or advisablest to do, or profitablest to do; but they never, so far as I hear them talk, ever ask what it is *just* to do. And it is the law of

heaven that you shall not be able to judge what is wise or easy, unless you are first resolved to judge what is just, and to do it. That is the one thing constantly reiterated by our Master—the order of all others that is given oftenest—‘Do justice and judgment.’¹ That’s your Bible order; that’s the ‘Service of God,’ not praying nor psalm-singing. You are told, indeed, to sing psalms when you are merry, and to pray when you need anything; and, by the perversion of the Evil Spirit, we get to think that praying and psalm-singing are ‘service.’ If a child finds itself in want of anything, it runs in and asks its father for it—does it call that, doing its father a service? If it begs for a toy or a piece of cake—does it call that serving its father? That, with God, is prayer, and He likes to hear it; He likes you to ask Him for cake when you want it; but He doesn’t call that ‘serving Him.’ Begging is not serving: God likes mere beggars as little as you do—He likes honest servants, not beggars. So when a child loves its father very much, and is very happy, it may sing little songs about him; but it doesn’t call that serving its father; neither is singing songs about God, serving God. It is enjoying ourselves, if it’s anything; most probably it is nothing; but if it’s anything, it is serving ourselves, not God. And yet we are impudent enough to call our beggings and chantings ‘Divine Service:’ we say ‘Divine service will be “performed”’ (that’s our word—the form of it gone through) ‘at eleven o’clock.’ Alas!—unless we perform Divine service in every willing act of our life, we never perform it at all. The one Divine work—the one ordered sacrifice—is to do justice; and it is the last we are ever inclined to do. Anything rather than that!

¹ Genesis xviii. 19, and compare Matthew xxiii. 23, and Luke xi. 42.

As much charity as you choose, but no justice. 'Nay,' you will say, 'charity is greater than justice.' Yes, it is greater; it is the summit of justice—it is the temple of which justice is the foundation. But you can't have the top without the bottom; you cannot build upon charity. You must build upon justice, for this main reason, that you have not, at first, charity to build with. It is the last reward of good work. Do justice to your brother (you can do that, whether you love him or not), and you will come to love him. But do injustice to him, because you don't love him; and you will come to hate him. It is all very fine to think you can build upon charity to begin with; but you will find all you have got to begin with, begins at home, and is essentially love of yourself. You well-to-do people, for instance, who are here to-night, will go to 'Divine service' next Sunday, all nice and tidy, and your little children will have their tight little Sunday boots on, and lovely little Sunday feathers in their hats; and you'll think, complacently and piously, how lovely they look! So they do; and you love them heartily, and you like sticking feathers in their hats. That's all right: that *is* charity: but it is charity beginning at home. Then you will come to the poor little crossing-sweeper, got up also,—it, in its Sunday dress,—the dirtiest rags it has,—that it may beg the better: we shall give it a penny, and think how good we are. That's charity going abroad. But what does Justice say, walking and watching near us? Christian Justice has been strangely mute, and seemingly blind; and, if not blind, decrepit, this many a day: she keeps her accounts still, however—quite steadily—doing them at nights, carefully, with her bandage off, and through acutest spectacles (the only modern scientific invention she cares

about). You must put your ear down ever so close to her lips to hear her speak; and then you will start at what she first whispers, for it will certainly be, 'Why shouldn't that little crossing-sweeper have a feather on its head, as well as your own child?' Then you may ask Justice, in an amazed manner, 'How she can possibly be so foolish as to think children could sweep crossings with feathers on their heads?' Then you stoop again, and Justice says—still in her dull, stupid way—'Then, why don't you, every other Sunday, leave your child to sweep the crossing, and take the little sweeper to church in a hat and feather?' Mercy on us (you think), what will she say next? And you answer, of course, that 'you don't, because every body ought to remain content in the position in which Providence has placed him.' Ah, my friends, that's the gist of the whole question. *Did* Providence put him in that position, or did *you*? You knock a man into a ditch, and then you tell him to remain content in the 'position in which Providence has placed him.' That's modern Christianity. You say—'We did not knock him into the ditch.' How do you know what you have done, or are doing? That's just what we have all got to know, and what we shall never know, until the question with us every morning, is, not how to do the gainful thing, but how to do the just thing, nor until we are at least so far on the way to being Christian, as to have understood that maxim of the poor half-way Mahometan, 'One hour in the execution of justice is worth seventy years of prayer.'

Supposing, then, we have it determined with appropriate justice, *who* is to do the hand-work, the next questions must be how the hand-workers are to be paid, and how they are to be refreshed, and what play they are to have.

Now, the possible quantity of play depends on the possible quantity of pay; and the quantity of pay is not a matter for consideration to hand-workers only, but to all workers. Generally, good, useful work, whether of the hand or head, is either ill-paid, or not paid at all. I don't say it should be so, but it always is so. People, as a rule, only pay for being amused or being cheated, not for being served. Five thousand a year to your talker, and a shilling a day to your fighter, digger, and thinker, is the rule. None of the best head work in art, literature, or science, is ever paid for. How much do you think Homer got for his *Iliad*? or Dante for his *Paradise*? only bitter bread and salt, and going up and down other people's stairs. In science, the man who discovered the telescope, and first saw heaven, was paid with a dungeon; the man who invented the microscope, and first saw earth, died of starvation, driven from his home; it is indeed very clear that God means all thoroughly good work and talk to be done for nothing. Baruch, the scribe, did not get a penny a line for writing Jeremiah's second roll¹ for him, I fancy; and St. Stephen did not get bishop's pay for that long sermon of his to the Pharisees; ² nothing but stones. For indeed that is the world-father's³ proper payment. So surely as any of the world's children work for the world's good, honestly, with head and heart; and come to it, saying, 'Give us a little bread, just to keep the life in us,' the world-father answers them, 'No, my children, not bread; a stone, if you like, or as many as you need, to

¹ **Roll**: the books of the Old Testament were originally written on long rolls of parchment. See Jeremiah xxxvi. 4.

² See Acts vii. 58.

³ **World-father**: here, in the sense of Satan or the spirit of worldliness.

keep you quiet.' But the hand-workers are not so ill off as all this comes to. The worst that can happen to *you* is to break stones;¹ not to be broken by them. And for you there will come a time for better payment; we shall pay people not quite so much for talking in Parliament and doing nothing, as for holding their tongues out of it and doing something; we shall pay our ploughman a little more and our lawyer a little less, and so on: but, at least, we may even now take care that whatever work is done shall be fully paid for: and the man who does it paid for it, not somebody else; and that it shall be done in an orderly, soldierly, well-guided, wholesome way, under good captains and lieutenants of labor; and that it shall have its appointed times of rest, and enough of them; and that in those times the play shall be wholesome play, not in theatrical gardens, with tin flowers and gas sunshine, and girls dancing because of their misery; but in true gardens, with real flowers, and real sunshine, and children dancing because of their gladness; so that truly the streets shall be full (the 'streets,' mind you, not the gutters) of children, playing in the midst thereof.² We may take care that working-men shall have at least as good books to read as anybody else, when they've time to read them; and as comfortable firesides to sit at as anybody else, when they've time to sit at them. This, I think, can be managed for you, my working friends, in the good time.

IV. I must go on, however, to our last head, concerning ourselves all, as workers. What is wise work, and what is foolish work? What the difference between sense and nonsense, in daily occupation?

¹ **Break stones**: that is, go to the work-house, where the male paupers are often set to break stones for repairing the macadamized roads.

² Zechariah viii. 5.

Well, wise work is, briefly, work *with* God. Foolish work is work *against* God. And work done with God, which He will help, may be briefly described as 'Putting in Order' — that is, enforcing God's law of order, spiritual and material, over men and things. The first thing you have to do, essentially; the real 'good work' is, with respect to men, to enforce justice, and with respect to things, to enforce tidiness, and fruitfulness. And against these two great human deeds, justice and order, there are perpetually two great demons contending, — the devil of iniquity, or inequity,¹ and the devil of disorder, or of death; for death is only consummation of disorder. You have to fight these two fiends daily. So far as you don't fight against the fiend of iniquity, you work for him. You 'work iniquity,' and the judgment upon you, for all your 'Lord, Lord's,' will be 'Depart from me, ye that work iniquity.'² And so far as you do not resist the fiend of disorder, you work disorder, and you yourself do the work of Death, which is sin, and has for its wages, Death himself.³

Observe then, all wise work is mainly threefold in character. It is honest, useful, and cheerful.

I. It is HONEST. I hardly know anything more strange than that you recognize honesty in play, and you do not in work. In your lightest games, you have always some one to see what you call 'fair-play.' In boxing, you must hit fair; in racing, start fair. Your English watchword is fair-play, your English hatred, foul-play. Did it ever strike you that you wanted another watchword also, fair-work, and another hatred also, foul-work? Your prize-fighter has

¹ Inequity: (literally, *not equity*) injustice.

² Matthew vii. 23.

³ Romans vi. 23.

some honor in him yet ; and so have the men in the ring round him : they will judge him to lose the match, by foul hitting. But your prize-merchant gains his match by foul selling, and no one cries out against that. You drive a gambler out of the gambling-room who loads dice,¹ but you leave a tradesman in flourishing business, who loads scales!² For observe, all dishonest dealing *is* loading scales. What does it matter whether I get short weight, adulterate substance, or dishonest fabric? The fault in the fabric is incomparably the worst of the two. Give me short measure of food, and I only lose by you ; but give me adulterate food, and I die by you. Here, then, is your chief duty, you workmen and tradesmen — to be true to yourselves, and to us who would help you. We can do nothing for you, nor you for yourselves, without honesty. Get that, you get all ; without that, your suffrages,³ your reforms, your free-trade measures, your institutions of science are all in vain. It is useless to put your heads together, if you can't put your hearts together. Shoulder to shoulder, right hand to right hand, among yourselves, and no wrong hand to anybody else, and you'll win the world yet.

II. Then, secondly, wise work is **USEFUL**. No man minds, or ought to mind, its being hard, if only it comes to something ; but when it is hard, and comes to nothing ; when all our bees' business turns to spiders' ; and for honey-comb we have only resultant cobweb, blown away by the next breeze—that is the cruel thing for the worker. Yet do we ever ask ourselves, personally, or even

¹ **Loads dice** : loaded dice are dice made so that, when they are thrown, the high and winning numbers come uppermost.

² **Loads scales** : cheats in the weight.

³ **Suffrages** : votes.

nationally, whether our work is coming to anything or not? We don't care to keep what has been nobly done; still less do we care to do nobly what others would keep; and, least of all, to make the work itself useful instead of deadly to the doer; so as to use his life indeed, but not to waste it. Of all wastes, the greatest waste that you can commit is the waste of labor. If you went down in the morning into your dairy, and you found that your youngest child had got down before you; and that he and the cat were at play together, and that he had poured out all the cream on the floor for the cat to lap up, you would scold the child, and be sorry the milk was wasted. But if, instead of wooden bowls with milk in them, there are golden bowls with human life in them, and instead of the cat to play with—the devil to play with; and you yourself the player; and instead of leaving that golden bowl¹ to be broken by God at the fountain, you break it in the dust yourself, and pour the human blood out on the ground for the fiend to lick up—that is no waste! What! you perhaps think, 'to waste the labor of men is not to kill them.' Is it not? I should like to know how you could kill them more utterly—kill them with second deaths, seventh deaths, hundredfold deaths? It is the slightest way of killing to stop a man's breath. Nay, the hunger, and the cold, and the little whistling bullets—our love-messengers between nation and nation—have brought pleasant messages from us to many a man before now; orders of sweet release, and leave at last to go where he will be most welcome and most happy. At the worst you do but shorten his life, you do not corrupt his life. But if you put him to base labor, if you bind his thoughts, if you blind his eyes, if

¹ **Golden Bowl**: a golden bowl-shaped lamp, used figuratively for the lamp of life. It is the "pitcher" which Ruskin has in mind. See Ecclesiastes xii. 6.

you blunt his hopes, if you steal his joys, if you stunt his body, and blast his soul, and at last leave him not so much as to reap the poor fruit of his degradation, but gather that for yourself, and dismiss him to the grave, when you have done with him, having, so far as in you lay, made the walls of that grave everlasting (though, indeed, I fancy the goodly bricks of some of our family vaults will hold closer in the resurrection day than the sod over the laborer's head), this you think is no waste, and no sin!

III. Then, lastly, wise work is CHEERFUL, as a child's work is. And now I want you to take one thought home with you, and let it stay with you.

Everybody in this room has been taught to pray daily, 'Thy kingdom come.' Now, if we hear a man swear in the streets, we think it very wrong, and say he 'takes God's name in vain.' But there's a twenty times worse way of taking His name in vain, than that. It is to *ask God for what we don't want*. He doesn't like that sort of prayer. If you don't want a thing, don't ask for it: such asking is the worst mockery of your King you can mock him with; the soldiers striking Him on the head with the reed was nothing to that. If you do not wish for His kingdom, don't pray for it. But if you do, you must do more than pray for it; you must work for it. And, to work for it, you must know what it is: we have all prayed for it many a day without thinking. Observe, it is a kingdom that is to come to us; we are not to go to it. Also, it is not to be a kingdom of the dead, but of the living. Also, it is not to come all at once, but quietly; nobody knows how. 'The kingdom of God cometh not with observation.'¹ Also, it is not to come outside of us, but in the hearts of us: 'the

¹ Luke xvii. 20.

kingdom of God is within you.' And, being within us, it is not a thing to be seen, but to be felt; and though it brings all substance of good with it, it does not consist in that: 'the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost:'¹ joy, that is to say, in the holy, healthful, and helpful Spirit. Now, if we want to work for this kingdom, and to bring it, and enter into it, there's just one condition to be first accepted. You must enter it as children, or not at all; 'Whosoever will not receive it as a little child shall not enter therein.'² And again, 'Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.'³

Of such, observe. Not of children themselves, but of such as children. I believe most mothers who read that text think that all heaven is to be full of babies. But that's not so. There will be children there, but the hoary head is the crown. 'Length of days, and long life and peace,'⁴ that is the blessing, not to die in babyhood. Children die but for their parents' sins; God means them to live, but He can't let them always; then they have their earlier place in heaven: and the little child of David, vainly prayed for;⁵—the little child of Jeroboam, killed by its mother's step on its own threshold,⁶—they will be there. But weary old David, and weary old Barzillai,⁷ having learned children's lessons at last, will be there too, and the one question for us all, young or old, is, have we learned our child's lesson? it is the *character* of children we want: and must gain at our peril; let us see, briefly, in what it consists.

¹ Romans xiv. 17³ Luke xviii. 16.⁵ 2 Samuel xii. 16.² Mark x. 15.⁴ Proverbs iii. 2.⁶ 1 Kings xiv. 17.⁷ 2 Samuel xix. 31-39.

The first character of right childhood is that it is Modest. A well-bred child does not think it can teach its parents, or that it knows everything. It may think its father and mother know everything,—perhaps that all grown-up people know everything; very certainly it is sure that *it* does not. And it is always asking questions, and wanting to know more. Well, that is the first character of a good and wise man at his work. To know that he knows very little;—to perceive that there are many above him wiser than he; and to be always asking questions, wanting to learn, not to teach. No one ever teaches well who wants to teach, or governs well who wants to govern; it is an old saying (Plato's, but I know not if his, first), and as wise as old.

Then, the second character of right childhood is to be Faithful. Perceiving that its father knows best what is good for it, and having found always, when it has tried its own way against his, that he was right and it was wrong, a noble child trusts him at last wholly, gives him its hand, and will walk blindfold with him, if he bids it. And that is the true character of all good men also, as obedient workers, or soldiers under captains. They must trust their captains; they are bound for their lives to choose none but those whom they *can* trust. Then, they are not always to be thinking that what seems strange to them, or wrong in what they are desired to do, *is* strange or wrong. They know their captain: where he leads they must follow, what he bids they must do; and without this trust and faith, without this captainship and soldiership, no great deed, no great salvation, is possible to man. Among all the nations it is only when this faith is attained by them that they become great: the Jew, the Greek, and the Ma-

hometan, agree at least in testifying to this. It was a deed of this absolute trust which made Abraham the father of the faithful; it was the declaration of the power of God as captain over all men, and the acceptance of a leader appointed by Him as commander of the faithful, which laid the foundation of whatever national power yet exists in the East; and the deed of the Greeks, which has become the type of unselfish and noble soldiership to all lands, and to all times, was commemorated, on the tomb of those who gave their lives to do it, in the most pathetic, so far as I know, or can feel, of all human utterances: 'Oh, stranger, go and tell our people that we are lying here, having *obeyed* their words.'¹

Then the third character of right childhood is to be Loving and Generous. Give a little love to a child, and you get a great deal back. It loves everything near it, when it is a right kind of child — would hurt nothing, would give the best it has away, always, if you need it — does not lay plans for getting everything in the house for itself, and delights in helping people; you cannot please it so much as by giving it a chance of being useful, in ever so little a way.

And because of all these characters, lastly, it is Cheerful. Putting its trust in its father, it is careful² for nothing — being full of love to every creature, it is happy always, whether in its play or in its duty. Well, that's the great

¹ When Xerxes in the fifth century B.C. invaded Greece, Leonidas, with three hundred Spartans, withstood his enormous army at the mountain pass of Thermopylæ. Leonidas and his brave men were slain; but the defeat, like our Bunker Hill, roused all Greece, and, in the end, they triumphed. Subsequently, the above inscription was cut on the rock of Thermopylæ as a memorial of the three hundred.

² Careful: here, anxious. See Philippians iv. 6.

worker's character also. Taking no thought¹ for the morrow; taking thought only for the duty of the day; trusting somebody else to take care of to-morrow; knowing indeed what labor is, but not what sorrow is; and always ready for play — beautiful play, — for lovely human play is like the play of the Sun. There's a worker for you. He, steady to his time, is set as a strong man to run his course, but also, he *rejoiceth* as a strong man to run his course.² See how he plays in the morning, with the mists below, and the clouds above, with a ray here and a flash there, and a shower of jewels everywhere; — that's the Sun's play; and the great human play is like his — all various — all full of light and life, and tender, as the dew of the morning.

So then, you have the child's character in these four things — Humility, Faith, Charity, and Cheerfulness. That's what you have got to be converted to. 'Except ye be converted and become as little children'³ — you hear much of conversion now-a-days; but people always seem to think they have got to be made wretched by conversion, — to be converted to long faces. No, friends, you have got to be converted to short ones; you have to repent into childhood, to repent into delight, and delightsomeness. You can't go into a conventicle⁴ but you'll hear plenty of talk of backsliding. Backsliding, indeed! I can tell you, on the ways most of us go, the faster we slide back the better. Slide back into the cradle, if going on is into the grave — back, I tell you; back — out of your long faces, and into your long clothes. It is among children only, and as chil-

¹ **Taking no thought:** here, not being solicitous or concerned. See Matthew vi. 34.

² See Psalms xix. 5.

³ Matthew xviii. 3.

⁴ **Conventicle:** a meeting-house.

dren only, that you will find medicine for your healing and true wisdom for your teaching. There is poison in the counsels of the *men* of this world; the words they speak are all bitterness, 'the poison of the asps is under their lips,'¹ but 'the sucking child shall play by the hole of the asp.'² There is death in the looks of men. 'Their eyes are privily set against the poor';³ they are as the uncharmable serpent, the cockatrice,⁴ which slew by seeing. But the weaned child shall lay his hand on the cockatrice den.'⁵ There is death in the steps of men: 'their feet are swift to shed blood; they have compassed us in our steps like the lion that is greedy of his prey, and the young lion lurking in secret places,'⁶ but, in that kingdom, the wolf shall lie down with the lamb, and the fatling with the lion, and 'a little child shall lead them.'⁷ There is death in the thoughts of men: the world is one wide riddle to them, darker and darker as it draws to a close; but the secret of it is known to the child and the Lord of heaven and earth is most to be thanked in that 'He has hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and has revealed them unto babes.'⁸ Yes, and there is death — infinitude of death in the principalities and powers of men. As far as the east is from the west, so far our sins are — *not* set from us, but multiplied around us: the Sun himself, think you he *now* 'rejoices' to run his course, when he plunges westward to the horizon, so widely red, not with clouds, but blood? And it will be red more widely yet. Whatever drought of the early and latter rain may be, there will be none of that

¹ **Asp**: a deadly serpent common in Egypt. Romans iii. 13.

² Isaiah xi. 8.

³ Psalms x. 8.

⁴ **Cockatrice**: a fabulous monster, part serpent, part bird; its look even was said to be fatal.

⁵ Isaiah xi. 6.

⁶ Psalms xvii. 12.

⁷ Isaiah xi. 6.

⁸ Matthew xi. 25.

red rain. You fortify yourselves, you arm yourselves against it in vain; the enemy and avenger will be upon you also, unless you learn that it is not out of the mouths of the needle gun,¹ or the rifle, but 'out of the mouths of babes and sucklings'² that the strength is ordained, which shall 'still the enemy and avenger.'³

¹ **Needle gun**: an improved breech-loading gun — the hammer of the lock has a needle-shaped point.

² Matthew xxi. 16.

³ Psalms viii. 2.

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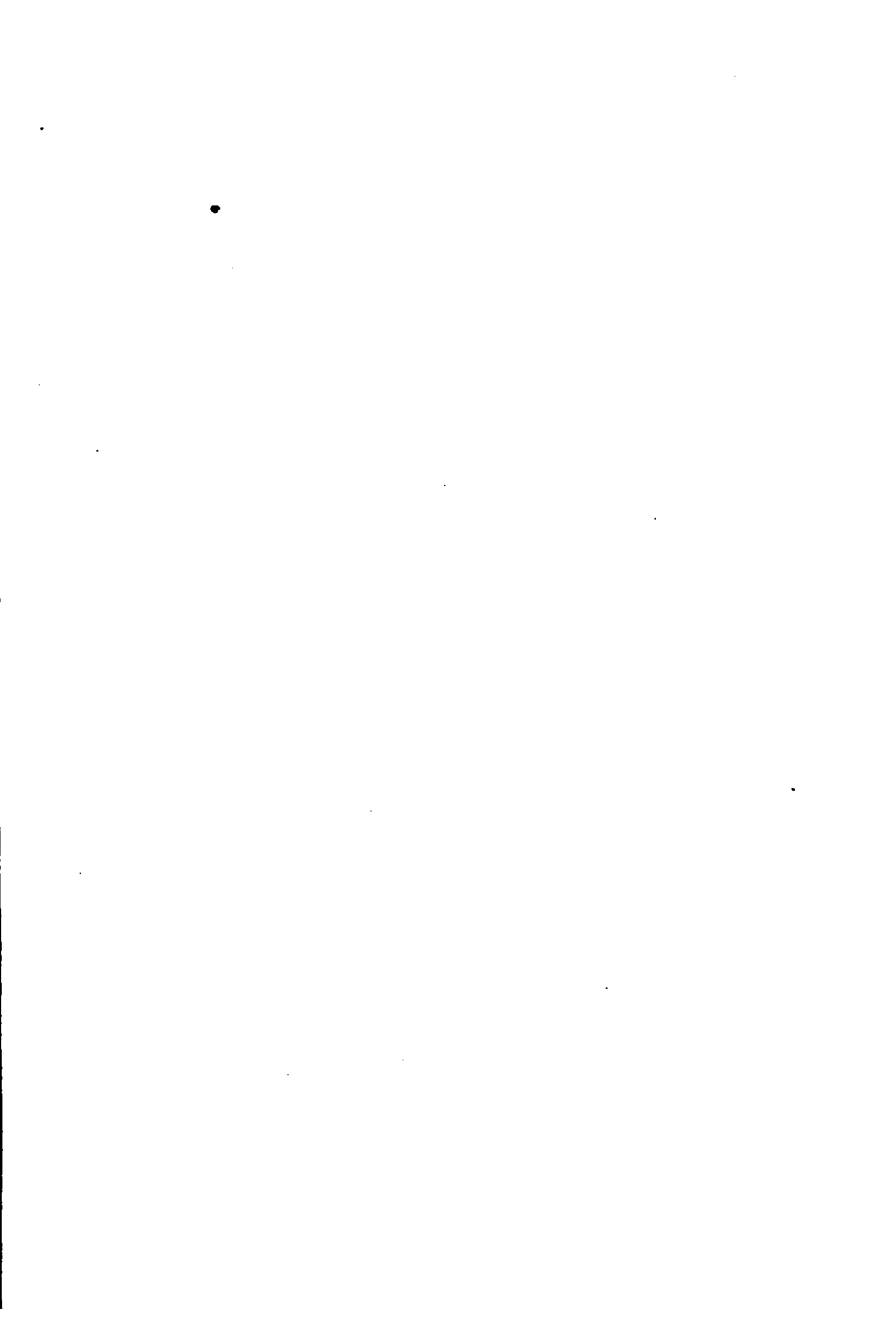
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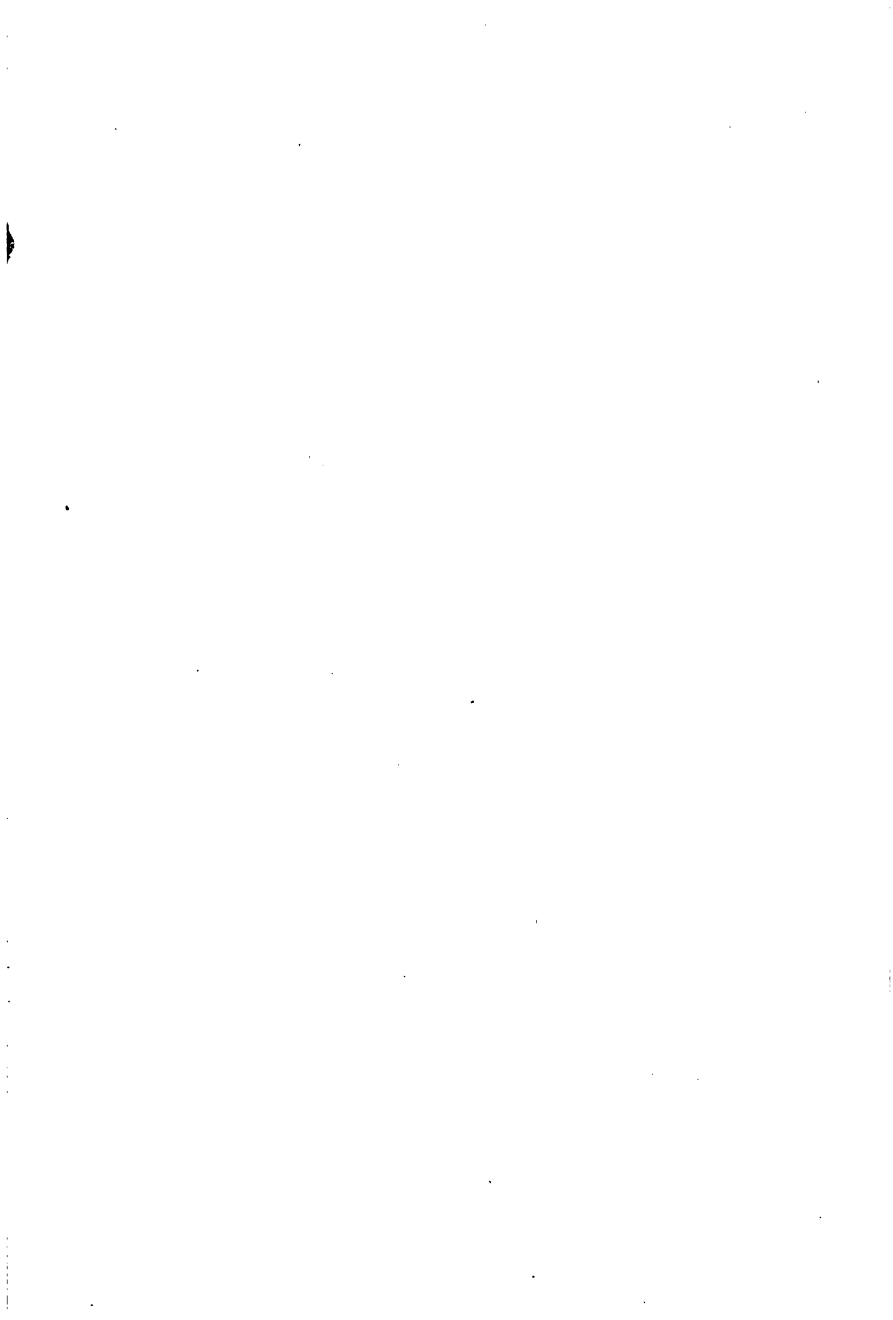
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